

# SOUTHERLY



NUMBER ONE  
1951

WALDOCK MEMORIAL NUMBER

In this issue

THE SHATTERED DOME  
(To the Memory of A. J. A. Waldock),  
by L. H. Allen

ARTHUR JOHN ALFRED WALDOCK  
1898-1950

by R. G. Howarth, H. J. Oliver,  
Dorothy Law, D. M. Allen

WALDOCK AND MILTON,  
by I. R. Maxwell

*Short Story*

SHE COMES AND GOES,  
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*Verse*

THE MOUNTAIN OF URANIA,  
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THE HOUSE, by R. H. Morrison

ELEGY ON DEAD SUMMERS,  
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*Writer and Reader*

HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON,  
by G. A. Wilkes

"TWO COURSERS OF ETHEREAL RACE",  
by Arthur Ashworth

ROSSETTI AS MORALIZER,  
by Peter Hopegood

## **THE MAGAZINE OF THE SYDNEY BRANCH OF THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION**

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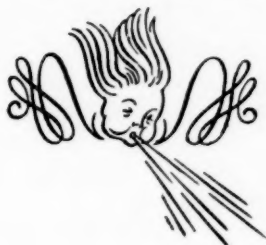
SOUTHERLY



ARTHUR JOHN ALFRED WALDOCK  
1898-1950



# SOUTHERLY



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R. G. HOWARTH

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## The Shattered Dome

(To the memory of A. J. A. Waldock)

*Longius aut propius mors sua quelmque manet.*

---

Hot summer on the gum-tree boles,  
Colonnades of some natural temple  
Flowering in capitals of leaves,  
Malachite blood-red rimmed,  
Sun-flooded columns marbled  
With sky-blue flecks or deeper lazuli.  
Bracken underbrush, burnished metal,  
Over-hovered with silver dazzle.  
On the edge of the path  
Flowers, blue and pink,  
Like sea-shells turned to tiny birds,  
Poised on thin sprays  
Spiralling from stems of diaphanous topaz.

Sun-drunken hour!  
No breeze, no carol in the drowse,  
The golden hush of some invisible worship.

The old bush-track I trod,  
Its fine sand fretted to blackish grey,  
Was an aisle hinting some adytum  
Known only to the spirit of Silence.

It was no afternoon for meditation,  
Eidos-contemplation, Shelleyan dreaming  
Beyond the Seeming, Blakeian sublimation,  
Awe of Wordsworthian Presences.  
It was a day of penetrant essences  
Breaking the barrier of the conscious.

*All shattered by a blinding crack!*

The flood of gold whirled into black,  
And over the shivering blue  
Hordes of swart pterodactyls flew,  
It was an agony to live,  
Thrust as I was to the raw primitive.  
Out of the horrors one monster dropped  
Iron-taloned, ravin-cropped.  
Over me hung blue-lidded eyes—  
The scythe-like beak, the griding shriek!  
Will it swoop? Will it kill?

A flash from the red-gapped throat!  
All the Bush was a livid thrill  
With an undertone of moaning.  
A great tree shuddered through all his trunk,  
Belched out his vitals in flame, and sunk  
Tossed in a death-shiver, groaning.

Death so near! So wry Fate's whim!

At that moment I thought of him.

The quiet scholar, dedicated torch,  
Coal from the altar-fire, transmitting glow  
Beyond the under-vapours of our dark,  
Keen in the crystal of a mountain air  
Smirched by no smoke from the red desert of doubt.

Yet sensitive-human, no pedantic flout  
Aloofly iced, but kindling care  
For youth's magnetic, apprehensive spark  
Was his fine fibre, sifting life to know  
And share the ingots of alchemic search.

Give me the music of that hidden Church  
Past Isis' veil, that like a bourdon low  
Sets the stilled soul toward the Source to hark,  
Yet makes descent from the ogdoadic rare  
To tune the discords of our jarring rout.  
Why mourn this shattered one alone?

Again

The pterodactyls shock the sky  
With fire-red interweaving.  
Not trees, but men,  
Split by the blast, must fall and groan.  
More, more prey for the blood-dripping Whore  
Why to be sacrificed?  
Is this the world you came to rescue, Christ?  
Was your death self-deceiving?

Is man the fool of Time?  
*Time! Time! Time!*  
Illusion's pulse reckoned  
Eking second on second,  
Eking minute on minute!  
God, Oh! why begin it?  
If you cannot mend it,  
Let some kind demon end it!

*Redemptor O! mortalium  
Veni, veni repente.  
Dies minatur ultima  
Iam mundo moriente.*

*In tenebras sol vertitur,  
Et luna fit cruenta.  
Vesanae gentes irruunt  
In mutua tormenta.*

*Sol, oriare, spiritu  
Caliginem pellente!  
Redux Aurora gaudeat  
Morte ipsa moriente.*

There are mists in my mind. Out of it floated that hymn.  
I dreamed I was an ancient Christian singing.  
It was a light bursting a nebulous shell.

*Time! Time! Time!*  
Irk of subconscious rime,  
Soul with a drum-beat drugged,  
Drowse of a lotus hugged,  
Fear of a nightmare devil,  
Why on your vitals shrivel?  
Can you not turn a catacomb  
Into a resurrection-tomb?

It is the piercing of the Mundane Shell  
Where Time is a point in a new magnitude  
And space a shadow of mist in a great light.  
There the Pleroma calls from this spinning mote  
Sick with enigmas harsh, obscurely guessed.

There is a loom within the Alkahest  
Weaving what is and was, where eyes devote  
May read the wefture with initiate sight  
Under the wings of the Dove that shine and brood  
Above the abyss of Life's dark miracle.

There I shall read his books, his mind's full swell  
Mirrored beyond our day's snatched interlude.  
The dome is shattered, but the arcane White  
Shall magnify the thoughts he never wrote.  
Death is the gate to unexhausted zest.

*Sunt aliquid Manes. Letum non omnia finit.*

L. H. ALLEN

# Arthur John Alfred Waldock

1898-1950

John Waldock, the only son of the Rev. A. J. Waldock, D.D., Minister of the Baptist Church, was born on 26 January 1898 at Hinton, New South Wales. He was educated at Sydney High School and the University of Sydney, graduating B.A. with First-Class Honours and the Medal in English in 1918 and M.A. with the same distinction in 1925. He also studied at the University of London during 1924. He first taught at Sydney Church of England Grammar School ("Shore"), then became an Instructor at the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay, and in 1919 Lecturer in English at the University of Sydney. In 1934, succeeding the late Professor J. Le Gay Brereton, he was appointed to the Challis Chair of English Literature in the University.

His main publications were: *Hamlet: A Study in Critical Method*, 1931; *James Joyce and Others*, 1937; *Paradise Lost and Its Critics*, 1947. At his death on 14 January 1950 he had made arrangements with the Cambridge University Press to publish his *Sophocles the Dramatist* (in two parts, I "Critical Canons", II "The Plays and Their Problems"), which was to have been followed by a similar study of Euripides. Meanwhile, he was meditating a book on Shakespearian questions and scholarship. A full list of his writings is appended hereto.

He was engaged to Miss Brydie Kelsall, of Sydney, and would have been married shortly before 27 January, when he intended to take his wife to England for the period of his sabbatical leave. His mother died in 1947. His father (who retired some years ago from his ministry at Canberra) and sister, Miss Nellie Waldock, of the Canberra Community Hospital staff, survive him.

John Waldock lived a quiet life, spending his vacations with his family in Canberra. He had nevertheless many friends—indeed it would not be too much to say that of his acquaintances there was no one who was not a friend. In his colleagues and students he aroused the warmest feelings of regard and admiration. He always generously acknowledged any help received while his works were in the making. As a lecturer he was unexcelled in his own peculiar blend of analysis, enthusiasm, personality, presentation and oratorical skill. By those who knew him, his voice can be heard speaking out of the wrought but individual pages of his books.

His standing as a scholar and critic, throughout the English-speaking world, is attested by the imprint of the Cambridge University Press on his works (with the exception of *James, Joyce and Others*, which was brought out by a London publisher of high reputation). To literary problems old and new he applied one of the acutest intellects and finest sensibilities among contemporary critics, and his style matched his thought. He was certainly a distinguished occupant of a Chair which had been held in succession by a great Shakespearian and a great Elizabethan scholar.

To Australian literature Waldo was by no means antipathetic. Indeed, he was always sympathetic to *writers* and subscribed to a number of publications. But he could not *read* our books with any great pleasure. He tried Tom Collins's *Such Is Life* several times, and retired, as he confessed, "baffled". He found a tortuous sentence on one of the early pages of a novel by William Hay and gladly made this the excuse to give up. He read Brennan and other poets desultorily. The truth is, as he avowed in his reply to the toast of the English Association at its Annual Dinner in November 1949 (his last public utterance), that his mind and heart lay in the culture of England, and beyond England, Europe. (At the time of his death he was delightedly engrossed in French literature.) He could not believe that there was yet a literature here to compare in any way with that of England (or America, which also gained his interest and even affection), worthy as yet to be a subject of study. Such a belief partly came from a reluctance to acquire knowledge of Australian literature, a lack of sympathy that prevented him from entering into and enjoying much that had been written; but behind it, too, must have been a feeling that world-standards ought not to be allowed to be corrupted by the demands of local writing for an appreciative public. Nonetheless he took some interest in the annual Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures on Australian Literature, welcoming the lecturers, attending at least the first and last of their series, and discussing various points with them. He could by no means be said to show indifference to the need for some recognition in University courses of our literature and for the provision of lectures on it. But it would never have been with him a close personal interest.

The happiest life, he thought, was that of a don in an ancient University—above all, a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. On his retirement—which he intended to make early—he would probably have taken up his abode in England, among the people and the things he most ad-



mired. Such a course could not have diminished the influence that in a period of thirty years he exerted on the educational, literary and cultural life of Sydney and the State. It might, perhaps, have been the one step necessary to bring him to the pinnacle of his career.

Appreciations of Waldock appeared in: the *Sunday Herald*, the *Australian Baptist*, the *Sydney University Union Recorder* (A.G.M.), the *Sydney University Gazette*, the *Bulletin* (R.G.H.; cut and altered to suit *Bulletin* style), and *Vesperis* (I.R.M.)

The following bibliography has been prepared by Miss Elizabeth Roberts:

#### Books

*Hamlet: A Study in Critical Method* (Cambridge University Press, 1931).

*James, Joyce and Others* (Williams & Norgate, London, 1937).

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*Sophocles the Dramatist* (Cambridge University Press, to be published in 1951).

#### Pamphlets

*William Lisle Bowles*: Australian English Association, Sydney, Leaflet No. 8, May 1928.

*Thomas Hardy and The Dynasts*: Australian English Association, Sydney, No. 16, July 1933.

*Macbeth*: Australian English Association, Sydney, No. 19, September 1934.

*Experiment in The Novel: With Special Reference to James Joyce* (in *Some Recent Developments in English Literature*: University of Sydney Extension Board, 1935, pp. 8-17; reprinted in *Some Modern Writers*, University Extension Board, 1940, pp. 69-79.)

#### Articles

"Hardy's *The Hand of Ethelberta*", *Southerly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1939.

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"Mr C. S. Lewis and *Paradise Lost*", *Southerly*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1943.

"Poets and World Orders", *Southerly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1945.

"Mr Edmund Wilson and *The Turn of the Screw*", *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1947, p. 331-4.

"The Men in Buckram", *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 89, January 1947, pp. 16-23.

"The Status of *Hard Times*", *Southerly*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1948.

"When Every Meal is a Wit-Feast", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1950.

"Human Youth in French Guise", *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 1950.

"Dogs and Old Masters", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 February 1950.

(The titles of the last three items are not exactly the author's own.)

#### Reviews

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*Reviews—continued.*

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*Correspondence*

*Review of English Studies*: Masson's Diagram of Milton's Spaces: Vol. 22, No. 85 January 1946, p. 56.

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Of "A.J.A.W." I presume to write only because there may be sides to his character and aspects of his scholarship which were not well known and of which a colleague and friend may be permitted to say a little.

Only colleagues and close friends would know, for example, that mannerism which Guy Howarth has elsewhere mentioned as the most characteristic: the habit of maintaining an argument until the bitter end—particularly if he was decrying some piece of pretentious critical nonsense about Shakespeare's view of the universe—and then bursting into apologetic laughter as he leaned back, half-exhausted, in his chair. Similarly, only Honours students will remember the manner of his ready participation in discussion, as an equal, in seminars. He would let us run on (it was characteristic of him that he should wish me to take the chair at these meetings) until appealed to for an opinion; it would probably be prefaced by the usual "I can't help feeling that perhaps . . .", and generally would at the very least re-state the problem clearly. And if someone should dispute his position and win out, the victory would be acknowledged by a smiling "touché!" or some other phrase that enabled discussion to continue in a spirit of good humour. Good humour, as well as penetration, he always brought to it.

Mention of Honours seminars is sufficient reminder that of all the academic men I have met, here or abroad, Waldock had the finest knowledge of contemporary English and American fiction. This knowledge, unfortunately, is not adequately represented in his published work (there is only the lecture on Joyce's *Ulysses* in *Some Modern Writers*, unless one includes the essay and other notes on Henry James); but it was the inspiration of the study of modern fiction at the University of Sydney. It started many of us on our own investigations; and I, for one, should not have been nearly so happy to lecture on writers like

Hemingway, Steinbeck and Joyce Cary had I not been able to rely in the early stages on discussions with him.

The last book he completed was on Sophocles; his next work would, however, have been a return to the field of Shakespearian scholarship in which he made his reputation. (Australians may not all know how great that reputation was.) For some years he had not lectured on Shakespeare: he did not care to speak on plays like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* on which he had published, and he modestly encouraged me to do the lecturing on the others. But his interest had been re-awakened in some of the more "difficult" Shakespearian plays such as *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*, and he had planned to begin a book to be called, probably, *Interpreting Shakespeare: A Study in Critical Principle*. Nearly every chapter would have dealt with a famous crux in Shakespeare, with discussion of the general critical principle that each raised. His "Men in Buckram" article would have been expanded into a chapter, "Variability of Texture", (to meet my "impossible" objections to it in its present form); and there would, I know, have been analysis of the importance of opening scenes in determining one's critical attitude to a play ("spontaneous adjustment"). We had already had some talk on the subject; I even received a draft scheme and a few notes, like this, which I think I may be forgiven for preserving and reproducing here:

"On First Looking into Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*" Immediate convictions (for your edification and amusement!):—

- (1) The theme is *Troilus and Cressida*
- (2) The play was meant as a Comedy
- but (3) The centre of equilibrium is displaced too far towards the War,
- and (4) Shakespeare succumbing to temptation, fails to hold the tone (our old friend Variability of Texture!)
- So (5) At the finish we hardly know what sort of a thing it is we have on our hands—but *neither did Shakespeare!*
- Still (6) The first two propositions essentially hold: it's meant to be about Tr. and C. and it was planned as a satirical drama.

Writing notes to us while he clarified his ideas on a subject was another of his mannerisms of which we have many happy recollections. Guy Howarth and I once discovered that we had each been conducting a correspondence with him for weeks on a problem in the First Quarto of *Hamlet*; fortunately we had been saying the same things, but neither of us knew of the other's participation until we had gained our point—

that the problem was more complex than he had at first believed it to be. Another time, every one of us received, in manuscript, a note on the question whether "cooe" could properly be regarded as a word. That all started over afternoon tea.

So, with *Troilus and Cressida* and the other plays there would have been more talk, some reconsideration, much re-reading, and a careful scrutiny of what others had written on the relevant questions for the last two hundred years. ("I'll modify it as I go along, of course—drastically, I expect. All in the air yet. Stacks of reading to do.") The result would probably have been as valuable a clearing of the critical air as was *Hamlet*; the book is nevertheless only a small fraction of what we lost in the man.

H. J. OLIVER

Matthew Arnold's dictum that "Culture seeks . . . to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light" was finely realized in the personality and teaching of Professor Waldock.

I first met him on an English Syllabus Committee. He was presiding over a controversial meeting, made lively by at least twelve theories and opinions catapulted into the air by twelve differing individuals, each firmly defending his or her idea of books suitable for third and fourth and fifth year students at school. I observed first how calm Professor Waldock was under the avalanche of words, and, then, with what courteous attention he listened to each view expressed. He listened as though he was really eager to learn, from the speaker, ways of wisdom in the difficult art of stimulating school children to read wisely and well. To every opinion, whether original or trite, he extended the same quiet deference. Thus thoughtfully he gathered in the views, he weighed them with scholarly acumen, he helped us to make valuable decisions. From that meeting I did not come empty away. I glowed with a fresh pride in my association with the University of Sydney: for our Professor of English Literature was, happily, also a student, humble, ready to learn as well as to teach. Further, he embodied in himself that University ideal more often dreamed than realized: "refinement of the understanding."

At each subsequent meeting was felt the same quickening desire to serve, and right judgment in serving, the schools of our state. They were the brightest of all committee meetings—just because they were illuminated by the sweetness and light of our president, Professor Waldock.

If one meets students who have sat in Professor Waldock's English classes, or students who have consulted him about reading for higher degrees, there springs spontaneously from them the enthusiastic tribute to his fine scholarship lightly carried, his classic spirit of lucidity and tolerance, his encouraging kindliness.

DOROTHY LAW

Every lecturer leaves to some extent the stamp of his individual personality on his lectures. This is particularly true of the late Professor Waldock, whose charming gentleness of manner was reflected in his writings and addresses. Although he held the Chair of English, he was never dogmatic in his statements to students and herein lay the delight which he afforded in his literature lectures. When developing a criticism of a particular writer, he progressed logically to an exact and indisputable conclusion but always in such a way as to leave the student with the feeling that other explanations could be developed and could also be correct. Thus one never felt compelled to agree with the Professor though one usually found after further reading that his explanation was the best.

Professor Waldock's wealth of biographical anecdotes and his quiet, whimsical humour made his lectures a sheer delight. The joy he found in reading such works as Barrie's *Mary Rose* and *Quality Street* was quickly transferred to his students by his own dramatic reading. Balance to this lighter side was given by an appreciative treatment of each writer's philosophy, faith and theories—this was the keynote of his interesting treatment of the Victorians.

Some lecturers have a marked affection for one period of literature but Professor Waldock lectured enthusiastically about each of the poets, novelists and dramatists whom he treated and his taste seemed universal. This genuine appreciation and zest for multiple periods indicated his depth of scholarship for which he has become known abroad, but, engrossed though he was in literature, Professor Waldock was always genuinely willing to give time and consideration to students who chose to consult him.

Professor Waldock showed kindly consideration for evening students: I remember vividly the apologies he so often extended to us when forced through increasing enrolment in 1947 to lecture in the Organic Chemistry laboratory. I remember, too, his short announcements in 1946 confiding to students Mr Rhodes's difficulties in Rangoon and sharing with us his disappointment at the postponement of his

arrival. Similarly, he shared with us his delight at the prospect of a visit from Professor Maxwell. And it is with personal gratitude that I record Professor Waldock's kindness in forming a distinction class in 1946-7 for four evening students to whom he lectured with pleasure that was apparent. These lectures were, indeed, the highlight of our Arts course for it was an unforgettable experience to sit around the table in the Muniment Room and listen to Professor Waldock discuss the salient features of the Augustans and Romantics. The friendly atmosphere he created and the opportunity afforded for student discussion was a foretaste of fourth-year work.

Sincerity, stability and scholarship linked with a genuine interest in his students have earned for Professor Waldock an admiration and affection that should, with the passing of years, become a legend in the annals of Sydney University.

D. M. ALLEN

---

The following note was written in answer to a colleague who, in returning a copy of J.I.M. Stewart's *Character and Motive in Shakespeare*, questioned the implications of Waldock's marginal notes on the passages discussing the rejection of Falstaff. On page 129 of Stewart's work Waldock had written: "Sh. wrote the thing in 2½ minutes, probably, and thought no more abt. it." And on page 139, after Stewart's anthropological discussion of Falstaff, "the scapegoat as well as the sweet beef," he wrote: "how all this wd. have made Shakespeare gape—an incident to which he scarcely gave a thought." What sort of critical principle was here implied? he was asked. Can we not solve every apparent difficulty in Shakespeare, every apparent inconsistency, by dismissing it with the remark that Shakespeare wrote the passage in a few minutes and thought no more about it? Are there no real difficulties, then—no apparent inconsistencies which careful consideration of the text will show to be, after all, dramatically consistent? If the great critics of Shakespeare have not been entirely wrong in finding some subtlety in him, how do we determine which passage or scene needs careful interpretation and which is a mere careless result of a few minutes' writing? [Waldock's abbreviations have been expanded.]

[Late 1949]

Dear La Nauze,

A palpable hit! Yes—a very dangerous remark, I admit, and I'd think twice before printing it. I'd never dream of elevating it into a principle, which would be subjectivism run mad. I just think that in certain cases, after one has surveyed the whole situation to the best of one's ability and taken everything into account, one is faced with a choice: either this is very simple or it is very subtle; either it means a tremendous lot or nothing much. I have a conviction myself—after taking the whole Falstaff-Prince Hal question into account—that the dismissal is not deeply significant, but was essentially a matter of technical necessity. (I developed this a bit, perhaps you recall, in that article "The Men in Buckram" and still feel—despite [H. J.] Oliver's continued resistance—that I'm right.) I don't mean that it's not significant at all: it reveals something in Hal we've seen before, but it would be a mistake, I think, to sheet it right home, as it were. I don't think it has any profound mystical significance about Falstaff, and I don't think it is meant to disturb us terribly about Hal—as it can



and does and must if we let it sink right in and brood over all its implications.

I hope to have another shot at all this Falstaff-Hal business one day: full of matter for discussion of critical principle, it seems to me.

Incidentally, I found the *Famous Victories* version, quoted by Stewart, very interesting, didn't you? I'd forgotten it, if I'd ever noticed it. I can't feel (at the moment) that Shakespeare does much more than pull it together verbally.

*Stoll.* No, I don't think he's flexible enough; but I must say I feel indebted to him for the strength and sense with which he puts certain absolutely paramount principles (such as that a play is not a mysterious reproduction of something that occurred, that is unrolled again from a mystical dictaphone—this fallacy [I call it the "documentary"] *never* dies . . .) and I always *check by him* most carefully. In short, I have a healthy respect for his common sense. (Notwithstanding which I think he is up a tree as far as the general impression of Falstaff goes.)

---

## The House

Where is that turreted mansion whose stone walls, heavy with ivy,  
Stand so unshakably firm athwart the terraced lawns?  
Not in our minuted time does it exist, but as in amber:  
Immutably transfixed, mellowed by sunlight, ineffable and pure.

It was not by chance that I conceived it, nor yet by my design;  
It was simply there, as it still is and forever shall be,  
Guarded by the three cedars whose broad shelving branches  
Sweep to the green lawns that slope steeply to the lake.

The high walls of the garden are laden with blossoms and with fruits  
That hang from the trellis among clustered tendrils of an eastern vine;  
While above the gate, sunning himself, a peacock stands,  
Dreaming the diorama of a shining and unknown world.

But this is no more than the beginning, a foreground to ultimate delight;  
For in the ivy-covered wall a casement with leaded panes stands open,  
And in the room within a piano is played by an unseen player,  
And the music streams out and gathers the scene into itself  
And gently wraps it together, and holds it thus for eternity.

R. H. MORRISON

## Waldock and Milton

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I have been rereading "*Paradise Lost*" and its Critics with eager pleasure, and regret that I must review it in haste and at a time when its author can no longer answer me.

Waldock is concerned with *Paradise Lost* as "poetic narrative" (p. 413), for his brief closing chapter offers no more than a few notes on the medium. His first question—a question which, he tells us, has never really been asked until about thirty years ago—is: "What does Milton mean in *Paradise Lost*?" But this is merely a starting-point, for we must not confuse intentions with achievement. The important question is: what does the poem itself mean to a sympathetic and intelligent reader?

Few readers have been altogether satisfied with Milton's story. Waldock (an enthusiast for Henry James) surveys it from the vantage ground of one fully familiar with the techniques of modern fiction, and finds it incompetently presented. Time and again it fails of its intended imaginative effect; time and again our "natural" view of events conflicts with Milton's "official" view. We cannot accept the official view of the Fall, for God's prohibition was unreasonable and Man's conduct "at the very least 'half-noble'" (p. 52). We cannot condemn Satan, for his virtues are real and his moral decline unconvincing. ("Satan, in short, does not degenerate: *he is degraded*": p. 83). We can neither love nor approve God, whom Milton presents with none of Dante's subtle indirections. And we are left dissatisfied largely because Milton himself was hampered by a theme to which his whole nature did not yield assent. Waldock examines with wise scepticism the attempts made by various modern critics to refashion the poem in the light of the "unconscious meanings" which they have read into it, and concludes that nothing much can be done to rehabilitate it. As he has already shown, it "cannot take the strain at its centre" (p. 56). "We shall go on reading the poem for ever, I presume, for the glory of the writing and for the spirit of Milton that so lives in whatever he wrote. Nevertheless the epic that is *Paradise Lost* stands or falls, as every work of literature ultimately must, by the sense it makes" (p. 143). On Waldock's analysis, it falls—at least to this extent, that it neither troubles nor satisfies us "in the manner of great tragedy"—and I cannot help suspecting that he would have been ready to describe it, in the hypothetical phrases of the first chapter, as "a majestic derelict, a great white elephant of poetry without real use or function" (p. 8).

What I have written is no more than the roughest outline of a thesis argued with all Waldock's dialectical skill and critical sensitiveness, with all his exquisite economy (the whole book is of not quite 150 pages!), and with that power of making subtleties lucid and familiar which should be the model and the despair of most critics.

This is not to say that I approve the approach or accept by any means all of the conclusions. I think that Waldock's inexhaustible acumen sometimes gives him the air of an Innocent Abroad. The fact that no angel volunteers to



be man's redeemer is to him a "fiasco" (p. 104); the transformation of the devils to serpents is an "amusing" scene (p. 92); when Milton describes the battle under flying hills "Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire" he should have "giggled" (p. 112); when he makes Moloch threaten to bind Gabriel (despite his angelic powers of contraction!) and drag him at his chariot wheels, he is "treating us very nearly as morons" (p. 111). The climax of bright literalism is reached when it is seriously argued (pp. 65-6) that doubts would have been cast on the quality of Satan's brain if we had been bluntly informed of the fact that he undertook his rebellion with the support of only one-third of the angels—that is, against odds of two to one. This might indeed be so if we were reading Captain Liddell Hart or Miss Dorothy Sayers—even *War and Peace*, or *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, or *Njälä*. It is surely not so when we read the *Odyssey* or the *Chanson de Roland* or *Paradise Lost*? But perhaps the clearest evidence of those "profound differences of feeling" which exist between us, and which Waldock has noted in his Preface, is to be found in his comment on the two lines which follow the first and most tremendous of Satan's speeches:

So spake th'Apostate Angel, though in pain,  
Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despare.

To me these lines, with their quiet finality and sense of recovered "control", have always seemed a perfect conclusion and deeply characteristic of the poet. To Waldock it is "obvious that the phrase is half mechanical: it is the first of a long line of automatic snubs, or perfunctory jabs and growls" (p. 78). A glance at the lines should show that Waldock is writing here without his usual sensitiveness to the quality of poetry and the meaning of descriptive words; but there is a more important point to be made. Throughout his book he assumes that the methods of the poet and the novelist are essentially the same: each must convince us by his dramatic presentation of the facts. It is true that the methods of novel and epic overlap; but the epic poet does not forgo the power on which most other poets must entirely rely—I mean the power of affirmation in *words* which require no evidence.

More generally, I think that Waldock's intelligent secularism exposes him to error. I shall give two examples. He says, truly enough, "everyone feels that the punishment of Adam and Eve is harsh" (p. 57). Those who no longer accept this story as true might well ask whether the analogy of crime and punishment is appropriate. In our sense, there is no crime and no punishment. A crime is an act flagitious beyond the point of social toleration, and punishment is the extraordinary pains which society inflicts on it. Adam falls, not from common decency to crime, but from perfection to the primacy of the human race as we know it; and his "punishment" is to become a mere man and live in the sort of world men make—and *must* make so long as they sacrifice to "half-nobilities" their allegiance to God, or Reason, or whatever we care to call the Principle that should govern all lesser allegiances. Waldock is much taken by Eve, and comments on her heroics in Book ix (lines 977-80): "She is a liar, but who cares? She has found the right 'objective correlative' for her feelings" (p. 63). This

is what many of her charming daughters have been doing ever since; and this is one reason why their natural home is Paris, not Paradise. If anything more were needed to convince me of the reality of the Fall, Waldock's comment would supply it.

Secondly, I think that Waldock, along with most nice-minded agnostics, tends to assume that Milton's business is to present a somewhat unsavoury story as pleasantly as he can. He "has written his poem with the precise object of enlisting our natural responses" (p. 55), and he unaccountably fails to do so. His God, for example, is repellent—"unamiable" is the word—and the reason must be that he "liked God in just that way" (p. 100). But is this the only reason? Could it be that Milton did not feel at liberty to invent the most genial God he could think of, and rather inferred the nature of the governor from the observed mode of his governance? "How the world is managed," says Professor Housman, "and why it was created, I cannot tell; but it is no feather-bed for the repose of sluggards." Milton's experience had led him to think of life as a stern business and of his great Task-master as something more than amiable. I do not think Milton's God a success—but that is another matter. I should suggest that, if we are to appreciate *Paradise Lost* at its full value as a whole, we should think much less of its narrative and its theology and much more of the poetic experience which begins with a gigantic outburst of rebellious energy, and ends, after that stony survey of all the ills that flesh is heir to, in the submission and renewed confidence of the closing passage which Waldock praises so finely.

To say this is to admit agreement with much of Waldock's criticism. I agree (and there is nothing new in this) that the epic form with all its traditional machinery often cramps Milton's imagination. I agree that the Fall does not achieve full dramatic reality—indeed, I am astonished that Waldock can get so much interest out of Adam and Eve, and cannot help suspecting that he is doing his best to find *something* in Milton which is almost, if only momentarily, as good as a novel.\* I sympathize with his closing "fancy" that some kind of majestic symphony can be dimly imagined in which Milton's genius might have been more at home. I applaud the skill and judgment shown in his comments on modern critics, especially his timely answers to Lewis's *Preface to "Paradise Lost"*, and, even though I cannot accept his assessment, I know that I shall return to his book for guidance and stimulus.

IAN R. MAXWELL

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\* Perhaps some such straining would account for a curious contradiction. It is said that Satan *must* stand out from all the other characters, and can indeed have no competition (p. 75); yet that Satan's conflict is a "shadow-show" and that the greatest dramatic moment is Adam's (p. 90). How then can it be true that Adam *could not* have competed with Satan?

## The Mountain of Urania

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## 1

Arcturus, gleaming from the Bear,  
Has named the snow-waste frozen there.  
In a polar season of the soul  
The explorer made the peak his goal,  
Where bloom the strange icelandic flowers  
That still redeem this age of ours.  
He knew the clearness of the air  
Whose sunlight cleaves a cold despair  
And glitters on each icy spire;  
Yet knew no clearness of desire  
Nor those life-giving flowers he chose.

O were the virgin of the snows,  
With wide grey eyes alert and bright  
(Who is the visitant of light  
From poetry's immortal source),  
Where she to show her solar force  
And hold him wholly in his course,  
He might not doubt; nor find surprise  
In that chaste answer of her eyes,  
Which promise and withhold so much:  
For he would know her slightest touch  
Had power to rouse him and reclaim  
His ultimate certainty of aim;  
Those pillars of green ice reflect  
The white light of the intellect  
In classic symmetry of line.

At last his energies combine,  
Converging in her mountain's glow  
That flames across the furrowed snow.

## 2

No *ignis fatuus* of the mind  
But subtle engines excavate  
The images we love and hate:  
That wandering energy, confined  
In straiter limits of their course,  
At once shows clearer, with more force.

So sometimes in the spacious bareness  
 Of that cold plain, a pure awareness  
 Can lead us, like a single star,  
 To where all human secrets are  
 Enclosed within its land of ice.  
 Many prefer an easier prize,  
 Hating the wind that chills desire  
 And, jungle-led, go mad by fire.  
 But the wind may, at times, invite  
 With sibilants of such delight,  
 We follow it; as music heard  
 Says most, yet does not say a word.

In that white realm the soul is known;  
 And as in layers of age-old stone  
 Are found what once were living things,  
 So here: but the explorer brings  
 Back forms wrought in the boundless blaze  
 No archaeologist can trace.  
 Though these were shut in frozen rock,  
 Preserved in shapes that seemed to mock  
 Their hidden source, they held the same  
 Eternal, clear and living flame.

3

Those sunlit sheets of ice, that plain  
 Of frozen sleep will each remain  
 After the explorer's feet have gone:  
 And yet the snow he travels on  
 Will bear a track which he began,  
 Immortal as that mountain's span  
 Where sheer sides of transparent stone  
 Command a distance of their own.  
 The whole circumference and height  
 Hold sometimes an unearthly light,  
 Refracted far across the snow.

These send, in alternating glow:  
 A red, like animal desire;  
 Then orange throws a purer fire;  
 And yellow turns to green, whence spring  
 The colours of each growing thing.  
 So memory, in its tide, must bring  
 The blue that lights the liquid sky;  
 Then evening's indigo. They die,

Changed to a fading violet light  
That shivers back again to white.  
This is the mountain of his choice  
Whereon the wind becomes a voice:  
For here the virgin makes it reach  
A cadence like poetic speech,  
Her accent taming its mistakes.

He climbs now where her mountain breaks  
That waste of white and icy-green,  
And at its top her tower is seen.

## 4

High in a clear expanse of air,  
His intuition seems to trace  
The elusive elements of grace;  
Yet even though all nature there  
Is hers and shares her being, she  
May still withhold identity.

But now he sees, around her tower,  
Undying amarant—a flower  
That flourished once above the fount  
Of life, on the Aonian mount:  
No blossoms grown on earthly trees  
Show lucent purple such as these.  
They form a circle, to enclose  
Tall slender willows in four rows  
Which, at the centre, almost meet:  
And there he sees a high sun beat  
On a tower solitary and bare;  
And then a glimpse of yellow hair!

Only for a moment shown  
Above a battlement of stone,  
Her close-coifed head and azure gown  
Have glided now in silence down  
From sight: for here she guides the soul.  
Doors opening by her control  
Hold in their darkened space a bright  
But ghostly blue and silver light.  
He enters and, where few would dare,  
Sets foot upon her ancient stair.

ALEXANDER CRAIG

## She Comes and Goes

By FREDERICK T. MACARTNEY

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The stairs up which she led me seemed unreal, like something seen on the cinema screen. They went round and round by short flights that made the ascent seem greater than it really was, with a window at each landing letting in the dark golden twilight on pale golden walls. She carried an unlighted lamp in one hand, the other was slightly raised and inclined backward as if graciously ushering me, and her figure moved ahead in varying lines of shadow edged with light. Her short skirt made her look very young. I have never seen lovelier legs. The whole effect was like a rehearsed and provocative perfection.

I followed her into a large room, and she placed the lamp on an oval table which stood in the middle. Before lighting it she glanced round the room as if to make sure that everything was right. I looked round, too, and got the same impression of unreality here.

All outlines were softened by a sunset afterglow that came through two arched windows at the far end. Its reflection from the polished floor, on which floated one or two plain rugs, was like foot lights without their glare. This accentuated the balanced spacing of the furniture, which, like the floor, was of pale yellow wood. A shallow alcove in one wall held shelves of books. Into a deeper recess opposite, under a window covered by a grille of scrolled ironwork, was built one of those wooden Spanish beds with sides curved at the head to follow the line of the pillow. It had a sort of cloth-of-gold coverlet matching the upholstery and window curtains. The few pictures on the wall were line drawings with faint washes of colour. The air had a close but pleasant fragrance, as if the room, though sweet and clean, had not been recently used. Its calculated elegance suggested a setting for a film star, though this idea probably came into my head because I knew it really was that, even if she was not a star of the first magnitude.

The girl went to the end of the room and opened the windows. There was not a breath of wind, and the hazy dusk outside seemed like a gauze backcloth, the more so because the darkness grew as quickly as the dimming of evening light in a play. As she turned back again I had a good look at her. She did not seem to mind, as if she was used to it, like a mannequin. You would not call it boldness. It was beauty sure of itself, with a piquancy of challenge, like the *sauve* sting of an

epigram. She had hair like midnight, big dark liquid eyes, the mouth wide but well shaped, the features being on the whole rounded slightly from regularity, easing into courtesy what might otherwise have seemed a disdainful expression. Her body was sinuous as a flame.

At first I thought she was Conchita, for she was very much like the photograph, and she resembled what I could remember of Conchita from the one occasion when, at home in Australia, I had seen her on the screen; but brothers and sisters of about the same age can seem very much alike to strangers. People had often mistaken me for Basil. The old lady downstairs, though I had not been able to pick out any name by which she addressed this girl, had distinctly referred to Conchita. The conversation had been in Spanish. Ever since I had made up my mind about the South American trip, I had studied the language, and I had been able to practise it a bit on board ship coming down the coast. It is an easy language to learn, but I could only feel my way round in it slowly by the book, as a blind man uses a stick. The old lady apparently could not speak English at all, but the girl seemed to manage it rather better than I managed Spanish. I got the impression that she was being cautious, but she put me quite at my ease.

That had been so from the moment I arrived. They were expecting me, of course. Basil had been here, and I suppose they saw that I was like him, so there were no stiff formalities—merely some polite amusement over the fumbling with words and the translation of them. I guessed that the establishment was owned, or at any rate, maintained by Conchita. They said she was expected at any moment and would certainly arrive tonight.

I had already been told as much at the port. When the boat berthed, a note for me was brought on board with the mail—a breathless, cordial but faintly imperious message signed "Conchita". It gave me the name of a café on the seafront to which I was to go and make myself known. Arrangements had been made to take me out to the estancia, and (the letter went on) as it was a long way from the town, I was to stay the night, for the ship always remained till the next day; she herself might not be home until the evening, so I need not hurry. I took the hint, and it gave me a chance to look round.

Late in the afternoon, after some hours ashore, I went aboard for a clean-up and to pack a small bag. I had brought Conchita's photograph with me. The sight of it made me think of Basil and the terrible finality of death: someone belonging to you is there one day and gone the next—not just gone away, but no longer exists.



He had an extraordinary career while it lasted. My father died soon after we were grown up, and left us a tidy bit of sheep country on the plainlands of the Riverina. We two had actually been working it for him for years, and now, with a run of good seasons, we made money quickly. The nearest town, a good-sized one in a prosperous district, was fifteen miles away. We became interested in a dramatic club that was started there. Basil was the life of the whole thing, and we all thought him marvellous, but I made allowances for the prejudice of my admiration for him generally. You don't often get brothers close friends like us. I won't say anything about his looks, for everybody used to remark how alike we were. We had been given a good education and upbringing, so we had decent manners, but I was blunter. He was one of those easy charming people who are never at a loss. I remember an occasion when, eager to join in a conversation, he came into a roomful of people, doing up rather intimate buttons as he came, but nobody seemed to think anything of it, and somehow, with him, it didn't seem a matter. He would do elocutionary exercises, or stand before a mirror perfecting a gesture, or rehearse one of his parts, or read poetry aloud, no matter whether the company was sympathetic or not, without any self-consciousness whatever; whereas I, with perhaps a too acute sense of the ridiculous, would sometimes feel embarrassed by these doings of his.

His entry into the film world had itself a local-boy-makes-good sort of celluloid unreality, though I suppose there is always a certain amount of luck in these things. There was a play on at the hall in the town, and of course Basil took the lead. It happened that at the time a film-producer from America was staying with the owner of a local property where he had arranged to do a bushranger film, and he came to the performance. When it was over, I was backstage waiting for Basil, and somebody brought this American round behind too. He asked for Basil, and, introducing himself, said, "I think I can use you, Mr Happy-go-lucky!" It was a shrewd recognition of the quality which afterwards gave Basil his vogue. He said, as near as I can remember his words, that he was sick of trying out bum actors who couldn't even sit on a horse and horsemen who weren't even the noun and adjective transposed, and now in answer to his prayers God had guided him straight to Basil, who was the goods as far as the acting was concerned, besides being (as he had taken care to find out from the friend who had brought him to the lousy show) a horseman as



well. I have only to think of it to see Basil's face as it was then—lit up, as by an annunciation.

That was how it happened. Before long he was in Hollywood, where he got a lead that was a hit in its way, and other good parts followed. Then they cast him for a South American picture, which required some shots on the spot. It was there that he came across Conchita.

She was then not much more than a youngster, doing a song-and-dance turn of a night at a café in the port he had gone to. She was an orphan, but her grandmother, who had some sort of proprietary interest in the business, used to sit doggo in a corner to see that the girl came to no harm, dozing with her head on her paws, said Basil as he mimicked her, but lifting her eyes occasionally like an old spaniel watching its pup.

He described Conchita's case as being like his own. He saw she had unusual talent and helped her to place it. She had more of a struggle than he had had. She got a start with dancing parts, till it became apparent that she had acting ability too, with an air of her own worth exploiting. A painstaking conscientiousness, Basil said, kept her back at first. She was like that. To see her performing you would not have thought so: she had such a free, if rather proud, audacity. I saw her only once. That was the night Basil died.

While he was in South America he picked up one of those obscure diseases which belong to tropical places and which still puzzle doctors. Within a year after that he came home, a hopelessly sick man. I still ran the holding, with a housekeeper to look after me. She was oldish, but she fell for him almost as heavily as the young things used to do, so he had all the necessary attention. I never knew him to be really bowled over by any of them. His needs in that direction, though quite normal, were apparently not deep. I have an idea that, when he found his place as an actor, his roles with women gave him, with his absorption in his art, some sort of equivalent of protracted associations with them in real life. He once said, in the course of some banter about marriage, that he wouldn't like playing the same part all the time, and that, if it came to the point, he preferred an occasional one-night stand.

One day, some months after he had come home ill, he was sitting on the veranda when I brought the mail from the township. There was a South American letter for him. It was from Conchita. He read it and laughed aloud—that mellow laugh, which, though his own,

he had rounded into part of his acting stock-in-trade; for, like most theatrical people, he mixed stage extravagance with his ordinary behavior.

"She owes me a thousand dollars," he said, kissing the letter, "and now she has lots of money and wants to pay me back. Dear little Conchita!"

He had, of course, mentioned her before, but now he told me about helping her. He had lent her money from time to time, but he had not imagined it amounted to as much as that.

"The dear girl!" He petted the letter. "She always had that haughty conscience! She is afraid I might think she was so nice to me for the money. But with such delicacy she says it! If she had been like that, there were impresarios who would have got her on quicker— but no! Not Conchita!"

He wrote and told her he did not need money, had all he wanted, but that if it was on her conscience she could send it. He added that he was now quite well again, but intended to stay in his own country. "I would not have her sad," he said as he sealed the letter, "for all the world." It did not seem to occur to him, as it did to me, that her attitude was something more than professional comradeship.

Some weeks later the photograph came. She had autographed it on the front, and on the back was written, "Come and get it."

"Ah, if that were possible, my sweet!" he said, smiling; but the smile had a twist in it, and I could see tears in his eyes, though I am sure he was not thinking of her so much as of the life he loved but could not return to. I took the photo to the edge of the veranda so that he would not think I noticed his distress, though he would probably not have cared.

"Is this like her?" I asked.

"She is better than that," he replied. "It does not give you the colour—like a golden rose. But she has grown up so!—from a beautiful girl to a lovely woman. I adored her." That, of course, was his way of speaking of or to any attractive woman. It looked as if she had a crush on him, though.

Some time after that, the newspapers from Sydney reported the showing of the first picture to come to Australia with Conchita starred. Basil glowed. He felt that her success belonged to him in the sense that he saw her first. So, he declared, we must go up to the city to see the film. I was dubious. His condition caused him a good deal of suffering, but, unlike most invalids, he never dwelt on that. On the contrary,

he would do all he could to conceal his ill-health. Once, when we had visitors, he put on such a good act that he deceived even me, till he suddenly disappeared, and I found him in a pretty bad state in his room. So I opposed, as out of the question, the notion of his going to Sydney—a full day's motor trip. He persisted, and even became angry, saying he would go alone, till I gave in, especially as it offered the forlorn hope of consulting a specialist again.

I arranged accommodation in Sydney and took him there as quietly as possible. I don't know why, but Conchita's performance, which was a gay one, got under my skin by its subtlety, or perhaps it was just because of Basil. Once, when the audience guffawed where there was really no laugh, he said (a little too loudly for my liking), "This is too good for these people. She is superb!" Afterwards, when the lights went up, he looked so extraordinarily pleased, that I thought the trip had been a good idea, and that maybe we ought to do it more often. I soon found how mistaken I was. He collapsed in the foyer on the way out. I hurried him off to a hospital. He died that night, without pain, and with that same look of pleasure on his face.

I found I could not settle down at home after that. I wrote to Conchita and told her all about it. I said I intended to take a trip abroad, though I did not definitely make up my mind to do so until I had written the words. I mentioned a possible trip to U.S.A. and then the South American coast, which Basil used to talk about so enthusiastically. By the time I had finished the letter I had said I would be leaving Australia before long. I told her I would drop her a line when I set out on the South American voyage, and would take a chance of finding her at her home town (for that was the address on her letter to Basil), adding, by way of a humorously pretended excuse for approaching a celebrity, "just to get the money", though I made it clear that this was a joke and that Basil had left me a good deal, apart from the fact that I had enough of my own before.

That was how I came to call, late in the afternoon, at the café on the waterfront. I was greeted like a friend of the family. Conchita's people still, I gathered, owned or partly owned the business, and I was additionally glorified by the aura of her fame. Yes, I was vociferously told, she had arranged for my coming. She had sent word, was herself now on the way home especially to see me. These people of the *teatro*! So much she was in demand! She comes and goes! If she had not arrived when I got to the place, always her grandmother was there, and her sister who was so much like her— O yes! Basil, so far

as I recalled, had not thought the sister important enough to mention. "A sister?"

"Si!" There was confirmatory gesticulation. The sister, she too was young and beautiful. O yes, certainly there was a sister! But just now there was, so sadly, only an old car to take me out to the estancia. The other car, the big sumptuous one, it had gone (according to the voluble noises and the signs in the air) to bring Conchita from the railway which had the privilege of transporting her.

I confess I was a bit dashed when I saw the vehicle that was to carry me. It was driven by a wizened gaucho of the same make—an old-looking young man who could easily have been taken for a young-looking old man. As we rattled on our way, I gathered from his less sophisticated expression of regret an alternative reason why this ancient roadster had been brought into use for the occasion. Had I come earlier, he shouted above the clamour of spare parts, he would have driven me out in the big, the luxurious car by the usual but longer route; but it must not be driven on the short cut we were now taking, because the road was so rough; and he was so sad about it, but so late in the day he could not have gone the longer way, because he had to come back and go out again some distance in another direction to collect his girl and bring her in to the cinema to see the new film which the boat had brought.

By the time he had got that off his chest we were clear of the town itself, and passed through scattered adobe dwellings such as I thought existed only in plywood on floodlit lots; and there were staring peons to match, wearing tall broad-brimmed hats, and paunchy women convoying goats or trailing beady-eyed brats; and I had even glimpsed, as we left the town, two brightly-dressed señoritas in a shadowy patio, one reclining romantically in a silken hammock; but Sancho Panza (or whatever his name was) promptly disillusioned me by explaining that, the tourist ship being in port, they were merely preparing for the evening's extra trade.

We came out to an open plain—*pampa* is the guide-book word—with a rough road consisting of little more than the alternative sets of ruts common on our Australian blacksoil plains, but with their monotony varied by small boulders (or they may have been stumps) in unexpected places. We sometimes missed these by sharp lurches and sometimes rode over them as a small boat takes a side-on wave. I was thrown about like a package. The only trees were, here and there, those big candelabrum-shaped cactuses made familiar in films about

hilly-billies over the border down Mexico way. Every now and then, some larger outcrop or accretion would appear, like a miniature range, necessitating a detour, generally swerving immediately back again. After one of these we came out to a well-made road at a spot quite near the estancia.

It was large but not palatial, flaunting pipes of modern plumbing, and there were commonsense cement pathways and a similar approach to a garage in a small courtyard. Nevertheless the place, with its avenue of paraiso trees and its low balustrades fondled by other greenery, still had an air about it, like a hidalgo in modern dress. Though there must have been servants, I saw none of them either then or when I went inside.

That began to puzzle me when, in that elegant room upstairs, this girl whose name I had not caught in the introductory hubbub, went away and returned soon with a meal for one. To make my privacy complete, she started to draw the curtains across the windows, but the night was so lovely—dark blue, almost violet, with sharp stars—that I uttered a polite dissent.

"Leave me the beautiful night," I said in Spanish as well as I could, "just for company," for I thought the hint could do no harm.

She smiled with pleasant innocence. That, she told me, was how Conchita liked it, too. Then, saying that she would come back later with coffee, she left me.

The meal, brought on a silver service, was delicious, with wine of a rich golden color in a bright green flagon, which shone like an emerald. Eating with enjoyment, I nevertheless began to resent this extraordinary reception, as if I were being kept on ice for Conchita. I even entertained the idea of clearing out, but could not think just how to do that or in what direction I should go. By the time I had finished eating and had drunk most of the wine (and there was quite a lot of it) I felt more at home. The room was very soothing, though the green flagon, the only flighty thing in it, brightened things to such an extent that, when the girl came up again with a delicious potion of coffee, I had to restrain myself from making passes at her; but I did manage it, mainly, I think, because, though she was so easily friendly, her good manners warned me off. Instead I stammered something about having to be back on board ship. At this she seemed quite startled. O no! Conchita had put this room, her very own, at the disposal of the brother of her so valued friend, and she would be so distressed if she

missed him. She would arrive very soon. The boat did not go till tomorrow. There was no way of returning to the port till then.

I was close enough to her to look into her eyes. In their depths they seemed hurt, and a wave of tender chivalrous feeling surged through me.

That, however (I told myself after she had gone again) was probably the wine; and since it could produce such noble effects, I finished off the rest of it. I am no judge of vintages, and its quality was probably wasted in such swilling, though I lingered over its piquant smoothness. Soon, luxuriously watching drifting spirals from a cigarette, I began to long for rest.

Damn Conchita! I thought. Her wine be on her own head. Two can play her game. She can wait till morning to see me!

I undressed, stumbled into pyjamas, blew out the light, and rolled into that gorgeously ample bed. After weeks of shipboard bunks, and with my body, which had become softened by idleness, now aching after the fierce joggling of that motor ride, it was almost a delight to have weary bones to be relieved in such caressing languor; and as I sank into it I forgave Conchita and loved her and her sister and the garrulous gaucho and the little old lady downstairs with the face like a wrinkled yellow crab-apple and the whole world. I murmured contentedly and slept. Then I dreamed.

A figure radiant in rosy gold came to the bedside holding a light above me, watching me as if I were mother's precious boy being gloated over after she had tucked him in. Conchita it was, in a wrap of silken flame, straight out of the loveliest love-story ever filmed. Boylike, through not quite closed eyes, I watched her go to the dressing table and open a handbag, from which she counted out some banknotes, placing them on a dressing table where I had put some of my things. Suddenly my dream turned to darkness, and as I lay dizzily floating on a pool of delicious wine, a rosy-golden mermaid dived in without a splash and took me in her arms; and it became a whirlpool, first lapping me tenderly at its edges, then dragging me down ecstatically into wild suffocating darkness. I think I went down three times, as drowning people are supposed to do. Each time I came to the surface I was rescued by those arms, only to sink into the same madly tingling depths again. As I came up the first time, a sibilant sound like my brother's name was breathed warmly against my mouth. The second time, the enchantress seemed to say, in a strange sea-language that I somehow understood, though it was little more than a shuddering



sigh: "You are so like your brother, but he was cold!" Then I went down and down and down for the last time into utter weariness and death.

Suddenly I was resuscitated. A moan seemed to tear across my brain. In the instant of waking to a glare of morning light from the open window, I recognized it as the noise of a car starting up in the courtyard below and dying away in the distance. I turned over and dozed. There was an inquiring tap at the door. I answered drowsily, and the next moment I was being asked if I would like coffee. I looked up, and there she was again, and I felt the irritation of one who feels he is being fooled. Was there no tea? I asked rudely.

Si! certainly there would be tea, if that I preferred, and off she went to get it.

I got up and sat on the edge of the bed, with my head heavy in my hands and feeling generally washed out. Then I rose, not quite steadily, put on my dressing gown, and went across to the dressing table for my cigarettes. What I saw as I looked down transfixed me. I stared incredulously. There, sure enough, encircled by the strap of my wristlet watch, were the banknotes. I counted them—a thousand dollars!—and I let them drop there again.

Puffing at my cigarette, I paced thoughtfully across the room, then leaned back against the edge of the table in a half-sitting posture, trying to make sense of a situation that seemed just damned silly.

Was there a sister at all or was she Conchita herself? If so, what was it all about? Perhaps there was a jealous lover who had to be taken into account. The old lady's burst of anger might have been disapproval of the trick being played on me. On the other hand, it could have been caused by the failure of Conchita to arrive in time to receive her guest. Hadn't the protestations at the café about the existence of a sister been rather overdone? It was hard to tell (and that applied also to the old lady's outburst) when you were dealing with people who seemed to become excited so easily. The gaucho's explanation about that ramshackle car seemed more feasible than the tale about the other one—the big, the sumptuous car—having been sent to pick up Conchita. What about the car I had heard a little while ago, the one that woke me up—would that perhaps be Conchita going off again, peeved because I had not waited up to see her?—or was it only the butcher or the baker or the daily garlic on its raucous rounds. It must have been Conchita who came into the room while I was in bed. Perhaps she just left the money, put out the light, and went away.

How long afterwards did the rest happen, right away or later?—if it really did happen! Or was that all part of a dream—a rather drunken dream? Suppose it did happen, it could still have been the sister! Perhaps she had been in love with Basil instead of or as well as Conchita. There might even be some element of jealousy in the affair. Even so, why pick on me? Was there some kind of perversion involved? And this business of feeding me as if I were something in a cage! Yet that might be just a matter of domestic convenience. The stand taken by the gaucho with his employer about driving me here indicated that the wage-slave in this country was no more docile than in mine, and perhaps the servants were not on the spot for some such reason as his. All sorts of possible complications chased one another through my mind. I was just about rattled by the time she came back with the tea.

It made me feel savage. Hardly giving her time to put the tray on the table beside me, I threw my cigarette on it, and turned and angrily crushed her in my arms. From the cruel pressure of my mouth she leaned so far back that I thought she would fall, but with a lithe twisting movement, almost as if it were a dance, she freed herself. It took her a moment to get her breath, but her face showed no resentment or distaste—hardly even less of repose. Very softly she said:

"You are so like your brother, but he was——"

She hesitated, with a hand fluttering, as one does when trying to think of the right nuance. She had spoken in Spanish, the words being the simple kind in my phrase-book of the language; and gaping like a schoolboy prompted by his teacher, I hypnotically supplied the commonplace adjective:

"Frio!"

Rather mockingly she smiled. Then that soft hurt look came into her eyes again, dragging at something inside me, and she turned to the door and disappeared.

Rushing after her, I was just in time to see her about to vanish round a turn of the stairs.

"Conchita!" I called.

She stopped, poised with one foot a step higher than the other, and smiled across her shoulder as she leaned back looking up.

"Conchita could not stay," she said in English that seemed to have very little foreign accent in it. "She hoped she did not disturb you." Then, as with hands floating above her she moved out of sight, the words she tossed up were like the taunt of castanets:

"She comes and goes."



# Elegy on Dead Summers\*

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## I

While the earth and sky shall meet,  
Puzzle-pieced along the range,  
While the rainclouds' thunder-feet  
Mark time and fall, or melt and change  
Along the rivers of the air;

While the clover-scented wind  
Along the gullies shifts and flows;  
While the gum-trees, dapple-skinned,  
Shed amber bark, and gliding crows  
Garble their warning of despair;

Over the south-west country, mile  
On mile of undulating land  
Shall feel the golden grip of summer, while  
The hot insistence of December's hand  
Fondles the yielding air.

So it was then, in summer's fire,  
Before the land was scored and scarred,  
September's sap fell back, and drier  
Than dead desire, the clover-stems, December-marred,  
Were heavy-seeded in despair.

## II

Hear the green whisper of time  
In a descant of hickory leaves,  
Or feel in the red-brown blood of the gum  
The pulse of the untrodden land,  
The murmur of life that forests heard  
In former incandescent noons.

In the heart of the south-west country,  
The many-armed gullies retreat  
To the flatlands, rich-silted by time  
And the flow of the waters,  
Ringed in by hills like placid duennas,  
And wooed by the flame-bearded sun.

\* The Henry Lawson Prize Poem, University of Sydney, 1950.

In the bronze dreaming-summer  
The eucalypt forests shawled the quiet earth,  
And the trefoil and clover conducted green riot.  
The forks of the tall gums held  
Like grey excrescences, the still koalas,  
And the great red kangaroos,  
The kinsmen of the morning,  
Found in the hollows the succulence of clover.

But when there was surfeit everywhere  
From too much richness in the air,  
Death trod the pathways in the reeds,  
And took the ducklings silently;  
Death lingered where the cat-foot-fall  
Wounded the corkscrew grass, and the clay  
In the green bark evilly foresaw  
Death to the gaping fledglings,  
Where the creamy belly of goanna  
Slid along the limb.  
When the heavy floods of spring  
Had burst the summer-fallen seeds,  
And multitudinous feasts of green  
Grew and climbed and intertwined,  
The crowsfoot, the clover, the trefoil  
And the later-silvering corkscrew  
Fought for the sun;  
And summer made a dryness  
Multifoliate.  
Then over the south-west country,  
Storm gathered and festered,  
Till lightning in slivers  
Lanced it with fire, and the flame  
Fell to the heart of the forest.  
It ripped to the core of a dead dry gum.  
The fire was a cautery  
For grey limb and dry clover.  
Fire-fall and flame followed the land.

And life like a fluting thrush  
Sang over ruin,  
When the grass speared the ashes,  
And taunted the sun.

Only the hunters, with eyes like the rock-pools  
At moon-rise, and brown feet as silent  
As the snowy-winged owl that flies  
To the hollow at dawn, carried the man-fear,

The terror that, swifter than hawk-fall,  
Flew with the spear and the stone.  
Not theirs the lust of the spotted cat;  
They took what they needed, and followed  
The ripening year. Their gunyahs  
Rose and fell like the white honey-blossom  
That bursts on the box-tree, to tell of  
Their camping ground. These hunters wandered  
To follow the seasons, and their shadows blended  
With the unscarred land.

III

The balanced summer of that old content  
Is autumned over by ambitious hands;  
Galah-wings have not changed their ancient tint,  
But kangaroos have left the valley bends.  
Unnatural fruit upon the growing gum,  
The quiet koalas have been plucked long since.  
Do spirits dance corroborees of doom  
Upon the flat they starred with camp-fires once?

The living trees are few upon the ridges;  
The dead gums, suppliant, implore the sky;  
The posts, in ordered files, mark out the edges  
Of the world, in stolid majesty.  
The willy-willy lifts the loosened earth,  
And in the gullies, when the grass is frayed,  
The corroding water carves a wider path,  
Tugging each clod with satin-fingered greed.

Only the passive soil unchanged endures,  
While alien hands now reap the alien grain;  
A land of scars perpetually shares  
A patient sorrow with the whey-faced moon.

IV

Out of the scored land has poured new sweetness,  
A finer tang to the inquiring tongue  
That seeks the nectar in the flowers of God,  
To which the wilder honey of the past  
Is a taste acquired and rare.

Here is a beauty more restrained and deft:  
The moulding of the formless  
Into plots and shapes of meaning.  
The fences, patient-ranked, divide  
Beauty from newer beauty:

## SOUTHERLY

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The silver-headed native grasses,  
Wind-waved and pliant, shiver on the sidlings,  
While the flatlands meditate beneath the fallow,  
Or the violet haze of lucerne flowers.  
Sometimes the jagged stubble,  
Throat-slashed in November,  
Dries out in pale, bewildered disarray.  
A yellow road runs  
Like an artery through the valley,  
And new gunyahs rise in stone and mortar,  
That endure summer after golden summer,  
And watch the honey-blossoms on the box,  
As it blooms and falls and falls and blooms,  
Under the ministrations of the heavy-footed bees.

The green jewel of growth  
Has been repolished and refaceted;  
From the scored land has come new beauty,  
A finer joy to the inquiring heart  
That seeks the nectar in the flowers of God.

### V

I saw a prophecy the other night,  
Like a dark shape of green and moving light,  
That stalked in from the sunset.  
That each succeeding day would bear  
A heart of lesser fire, while the breath  
Along the gullies of the south-west land  
Would be more chill in each succeeding dusk,  
Promising the crisp and glitter  
Of the leprous frosts of late July.

A wind stole through the valley  
And breathed its desolation  
Into the gullies of my heart:  
The alien wind that blew before  
The forests were, and hurried through  
The high and hollow places of the world  
Before the southern land arose,  
Pock-marked and tortured, from a heaving sea.  
It was a prescient wind,  
And as it curled around my throat,  
I saw a vision of the south-west country,  
When I slipped from the fence-fringed world  
As the brown snake sheds his tattered skin  
In the pulsing grasses of the spring.  
I saw the summer of my frail delight

Melt into an autumn of oblivion.  
I saw the more enduring gunyahs  
Fall stone from stone, until the swallows  
Nestled in the chimney-hollows,  
When the honey-blossom on the box  
Had burst its bronze and oval prisons.  
I saw the fences rot and fall,  
And wires, like twists of tangled thought,  
Rust and then disintegrate.  
The sturdy grass resumed its own dominion  
Upon the bare white road that saunters  
Through the valley, and the haughty grain  
Fell before the phalanxes of weeds.  
Then across the south-west country,  
A forest-shadow reared and stretched,  
And tentacled the waiting valley.  
Through the all-encompassing green I heard  
The tremulous haunting of the hurrying wind,  
As it carried to me with a muted sigh  
Ancestral voices, prophesying change:  
From the flats where lie  
The blunted axes made of stone  
Were whispered, faint upon the wind,  
The secret songs of ancient men,  
Ghost corroborrees on the wind,  
Bewailing summers sere and fled,  
And calling through the dreaming-time  
To another lusty summer,  
Hidden in a lake of fire.

Dusk died suddenly upon the moon's slim scythe,  
And the phoenix-shadow faded.  
The fences rose again, and the road  
Burgeoned once more in dusty surety.  
But the fluid-fingered wind oppressed me,  
Like a teasing voice of time:  
"I, the ancient alien, tell you this:  
Surely will your summer end,  
For you are the aliens  
With faces like the snow, and the earth  
Defeats all aliens but me.  
Your stay is but a little blur  
Upon the mirror of her joy, and Time,  
That has no stop, will wipe it clean."  
The wind was gone and I remained,  
Desolate in a vast indifference.

I saw a prophecy the other night,  
Like a dark shape of green and moving light,  
That stalked in from the sunset.

VI

Now I see my summer ended,  
Autumn-promise in the rain;  
All the harvest-strength expended  
On the garnering of grain,  
Winnowed in the sifting air.

A sombre winter gave forewarning,  
But I persisted in delight;  
I saw the more reluctant morning,  
And watched the year grow bitter-bright,  
But never heeded their despair.

I fear to see my years retreating,  
To watch the summer-fire depart;  
And feel the autumn rain fall, beating,  
On the honey-blossoms of the heart,  
Whose incense numbed the eager air.

So it must be that summer's fire  
Will leave me, and my heart grow sore.  
September's sap falls back, and drier  
Than dead desire, the blossom-cups, December-drear,  
Are pale and scentless in despair.

JUNE HARTNETT

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Sonnet

Death keeps a door through which he cannot pass.  
He is of Time who tears the robes from kings,  
Who saint and sinner bares, and naked brings  
Worker and millionaire to the one class,  
Whose badge is dust, and grave whose pick-up shed  
He is of Time and dwells within the clock,  
His voice the tick of seconds and the shock  
Of bells—the swing of pendulum his tread.

And these without he is a nothingness,  
As Time before the silent force was placed  
Within the spring, but, while the balanced stress  
Remains, he is, and cannot be outfaced.  
To him must all men come, him once must see  
Who keeps the door to Immortality.

PAUL L. GRANO

## The Journey of John Donne\*

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In the body's meridian  
He left the shoals to find  
By deviations of his heart  
The true north of his mind.

He sailed by reefs of sirens  
And islands of lost hope  
Where murmured ghosts of mariners  
Tangled in deep-sea rope.

Then he moored his passionate craft  
Close to a girdled shore;  
But in travail that faithful land  
Sank to the occult floor.

Mapping his darkened hemispheres,  
He found love's paradigm  
Nailed as the answer to his grief  
On one green branch of time.

He saw the red beams of his faith  
Stream from the blood's eclipse,  
And when his bell tolled nine he held  
A trumpet to his lips

To warn men neither wealth nor power  
Prolonged a journey's term,  
That all men, captains and the crews,  
Were conscripts of the worm.

Resigned, he gazed at his image  
Wrapped in a winding-sheet,  
Then gathered orchids from the grave  
To garland death's defeat.

MAX DUNN

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\* Revised version of poem published in *Time of Arrival*.



## Writer and Reader

HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

*Henry Handel Richardson: A Study.* By Nettie Palmer. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1950. 15s.)

For over twenty years a correspondent of Henry Handel Richardson's, and on more than one occasion a guest at her home in East Sussex, Nettie Palmer is one of the few Australians—Mrs Mary Kernot is another—who can write of Henry Handel Richardson from personal knowledge. In gathering material for this monograph, she has also consulted other friends of the novelist, inspected notebooks kept on her visit to Australia in 1912, and secured for publication some family photographs. It follows that Mrs Palmer's study makes a definite contribution to the biography of Henry Handel Richardson. The most valuable part of the book is probably the appendix, which presents the novelist's letters to Mrs Palmer from 1927 onwards: this correspondence is thickly strewn with comments on her work. Mrs Palmer is the first to give any account of the 1912 visit—of which we have hitherto known nothing, except that it occurred—and she has been able to identify more of the characters of the trilogy with actual persons: John Turnham with John Bailey, Henry Ocock with Henry Cuthbert, and the Spence family with the Dods.

Two minor points might be queried. A close reading of *Myself When Young* reveals that Henry Handel Richardson's memory is occasionally unreliable on small details of her early life: for instance, she states that her birth—an event of which she could have no precise recollection in any case—occurred on 3 January 1870 at 1 Blanch Terrace, East Melbourne. A copy of her birth certificate, in the Mitchell Library, gives the birthplace as 139 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy. Mrs Palmer neither notes nor resolves the discrepancy. Again following *Myself When Young*, Mrs Palmer states that Henry Handel Richardson left home for the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Melbourne in 1882, at the age of twelve. According to the school records (cited by the Principal, W. Gray, in a letter to A. G. Stephens, 27 July, 1932, in the Mitchell Library) she entered the lowest class of the College in February 1883, when she would have been just over thirteen. A margin of one year is not crucial, but it is as well to be exact.

As Mrs Palmer's acquaintance with Henry Handel Richardson was confined to the latter years of her life, it is perhaps natural that her portrait should show her as a recluse, almost defensively reserved. It might have been made clearer, I think, that this seclusion was characteristic of Henry Handel Richardson's later years only: her earlier life in Australia, at Leipzig and at Strasbourg was energetic and sociable, and a balanced portrait should allow this some prominence. Mrs Palmer might also have emphasized that the withdrawal from society was imposed on Henry Handel Richardson by her health: "My health . . . never recovered from the strain of the Leipzig years," she has written. "I realised quite early in my life that I had not the strength for both work

and society, and I made my choice." Mrs Palmer does not omit this explanation: the complaint is that she does not give it sufficient emphasis.

The main criticism of the biographical outline, however, is that there is no adequate discussion of the materials on which it draws. Very often fresh information is given without any mention of the authority; Henry Handel Richardson's words are quoted, but there is no indication of the source—sometimes we find it in the correspondence at the end, at other times we do not. For this reason Mrs Palmer's work may prove of less assistance to later investigators than it might have been. Some sources appear to have been neglected—for instance, the reports of the many press interviews granted by Henry Handel Richardson in the early nineteen thirties, which are conveniently assembled, with much other material, in two volumes of newspaper cuttings at the Mitchell Library. Though Mrs Palmer has made a useful contribution to the biography of Henry Handel Richardson, on some matters there is more information available than she has presented.

The chapters of the book devoted to criticism do not possess the novelty of the biographical sections. Discussing the novels, Mrs Palmer says most of the usual things, though she says them perceptively: if she says anything unusual—the comparison of *The Getting of Wisdom* with *Huckleberry Finn*, for example—one generally feels moved to protest. The examination of the novels begins with *The Getting of Wisdom*, which Mrs Palmer suggests Henry Handel Richardson "played with . . . during her period of apprenticeship", so that it was probably begun before *Maurice Guest*, though not published till afterwards. *The Getting of Wisdom* is therefore placed first in Mrs Palmer's survey of the novels. This is a surprising decision. The novelist's own testimony, in "Some Notes on My Books", is explicit: the first three chapters of *The Getting of Wisdom* were written while she was still engaged on *Maurice Guest*, "partly as a relief from that book's growing gloom," and she considers that *The Getting of Wisdom*, "in its greater compactness of form and expression . . . shows a marked improvement on the longueurs, the youthful desire to leave nothing unsaid, that characterized *Maurice Guest*." If Mrs Palmer has any evidence to controvert this, she should disclose it. Otherwise we may continue to share Henry Handel Richardson's belief that *The Getting of Wisdom* is her second novel.

The appraisal of both *Maurice Guest* and *The Getting of Wisdom* is nevertheless sensitive, and some reference is made to their continental ancestry. Since Henry Handel Richardson published her autobiographical sketch in *Twentieth Century Authors* in 1942, we have known that the formative influences on her work were all foreign: "I soaked myself in French, Russian, German and Scandinavian literature. . . . Not until I wrote my third book, *Australia Felix*, did I begin to come into line with the traditions of the English novel". This was also stressed by J. G. Robertson in his essay in *Myself When Young*, and accordingly Mrs Palmer writes loosely of *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*, of Stendhal and Björnson. But both she and Professor Robertson have neglected the strongest single influence, the work of Danish novelist, J. P. Jacobsen. Henry Handel Richardson published a translation of Jacobsen's *Niels Lyhne* under the title "Siren Voices" in 1896, the year before she began *Maurice*

*Guest*, and she also contributed a revealing study of his work to *Cosmopolis* in 1897, while *Maurice Guest* was in progress. While the affinities of this first novel with the work of other continental writers are generally vague, its affinities with Jacobsen's works are more specific: in the general quality of the eroticism, in the similarity between Maurice and the typical Jacobsen hero, and in the traits common to Louise and the typical Jacobsen heroine. Without suggesting that *Maurice Guest* is a derivative work, it is not too much to claim that most of its features that are unprecedented in the English fiction of the time—it appeared in 1908—may be traced to Jacobsen. Behind *The Getting of Wisdom*, similarly, is Henry Handel Richardson's translation of Björnson's *Fiskerjenten*, though here the influence is slighter. Mrs Palmer has not neglected this foreign lineage, but she may have put the emphasis in the wrong places.

The novel with which Henry Handel Richardson first comes into line with the English tradition, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, receives a generous treatment, with a separate chapter for each of the three volumes. One point that Mrs Palmer does not make is that this chronicle, as originally projected, was to have been completed in two volumes only: "One morning in 1923, however (the author observes) I wakened to the knowledge that the third part was going to need a book to itself. The middle section would have to stand alone, raw edged though it was. And so I made the break, trimmed the edges as best I could, and sent the MS. in." Mrs Palmer feels "something disconcerting" about the structure of *The Way Home*, some "uncertainty about its direction": these circumstances partly explain it.

Generally, the merit of Mrs Palmer's examination of the trilogy lies in her analysis of its psychological progression: in particular, of the developing relationship between Richard and Mary. Her comments on the technique—in *Australia Felix*, the minor figures are merely "puppets necessary for the peopling of a world for Mahony"—are less distinguished, and it is hard to applaud her efforts to detect the "vision of life" behind the story. We now discover that Mary is really an "image of Everywoman", "a symbol of the recuperative force of humanity".

Mrs Palmer pursues the history of Mary and Cuffy into *The End of a Childhood*, a volume worthy of a little more attention than she has given it. No one would make any extravagant claims for this collection, but it does afford an opportunity for studying Henry Handel Richardson as a short-story writer—an opportunity that Mrs Palmer seems reluctant to take. The composition of the volume is interesting: "Mary Christina" was written between *The Getting of Wisdom* and *Australia Felix*, "Peterle Luthy" and "The Professor's Experiment" were written while the trilogy was in progress, and *The Bath* had been previously issued in book form, illustrated, in 1933.\* *The End of a Childhood* (1934) represents different periods of Henry Handel Richardson's development, and individual stories allow some of the features of her novels to be studied in isolation. Mrs Palmer does not mention two later pieces: "The Coat," which appeared in *Good Housekeeping* in February 1940, and "Sister Annie", published in Australia in *The Woman's Day*, May 22, 1950.

\* "Mary Christina" and "The Life and Death of Peterle Luthy" had appeared in a limited edition as *Two Studies* in 1931.

The critical survey concludes with *The Young Cosima*. Most readers have felt some dissatisfaction with this novel. Mrs Palmer admits that it is in part a failure, finding the cause in the impossibility of rendering Wagner's musical genius in words. A more likely cause is the difficulty of the historical material with which Henry Handel Richardson had to deal. She was embarrassed by the problem of disentangling the private histories of her characters from their public careers, by the frequent changes of milieu required for historical accuracy, and above all by the difficulty of obtaining any reliable information on the growth of the Cosima-Wagner liaison, the vertebral column of the novel. Her account of the triangular relationship, based on unavoidably inadequate data, is all the time raising problems of motivation that are left unsolved, and as Henry Handel Richardson was too intent on historical accuracy to invent solutions, she seems to have been defeated by the limitation of the materials. Whatever the source of the deficiency, *The Young Cosima* is not one of the major novels, and there may be no need to regret that Henry Handel Richardson did not proceed with *Cosima in Triebtschen*.

The general impression one receives from Nettie Palmer's study is that it is a "popular" book on Henry Handel Richardson rather than a scholarly monograph, but we should be glad to have it for all that.

G. A. WILKES

#### "TWO COURSERS OF ETHEREAL RACE"

*Jindyworobak Anthology*, 1949. Edited by R. G. Howarth. (Jindyworobak Publication, Melbourne. 5s.)

*Australian Poetry*, 1949-50. Edited by Rosemary Dobson. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney. 1950. 7s. 6d.)

Jindyworobak poetry seems to be merging into the main stream of contemporary Australian poetry, and the confluence is as placid as that of the Murray and the Darling. Rex Ingamells claimed in the *Jindyworobak Review* that "our original and chief task is already accomplished; that is to say Jindyworobak has effectively drawn much needed attention to the problem of presenting our unique continent in literature". Doubtless there is much truth in this.

The *Jindyworobak Anthology* of 1949 and *Australian Poetry* of 1949-50 are indistinguishable as far as the themes of the poetry in each are concerned. In both the majority of the poets handle Australian subjects and employ Australian imagery. The Jindyworobaks can perhaps only be distinguished now by their partiality for the aboriginals; but Alcheringa is not mentioned once, and Lilieth Norman in "The Colour of Sorrow" prefers to use the term Yamminga for the mystic Dream Time. Moreover no less than eleven poets who are represented in the *Jindyworobak Anthology* appear also in *Australian Poetry*, and are equally at home there.

R. G. Howarth, the editor of last year's *Jindyworobak Anthology*, has evidently endeavoured to include pieces from as many poets as possible, so that forty-four different poets are represented. The extent of poetry writing in Australia is thus better illustrated by this anthology than by *Australian Poetry* where the editor, Rosemary Dobson, has limited herself to twenty-nine, in-

cluding almost all the best-known names among contemporary writers. She has played safe and has done a careful job; the quality is sure and the standard high.

But one is attracted nevertheless by the adventurous policy of the editor of the *Jindyworobak Anthology*. With a much wider representation it gathers in surprisingly few immaturities of expression and it gains by vigour of thought and by ideas. Most of the writers have something to say. Colin Thiele for instance in "Red Snow" has a thesis, and an angry thesis. The poem has blood in its veins. Whereas Harold Stewart in "Aeolus and the Winds" only demonstrates that a play of fancy does not take the place of imagination, and verbal felicity can be a surface veneer only.

Mary Gilmore contributes one poem to each anthology, and manages in each to develop an uncomplicated thought with austere compression of language. Her poems are acquiring a gnomic character. Roland Robinson uses a pleasant and often subtle understatement for his landscape pictures. David Rowbotham, Nancy Keesing, John Blight and Nancy Cato are all worth watching, and are probably the most promising of the newer poets represented in both anthologies. Judith Wright is seen to better advantage in *Australian Poetry* than she is in the *Jindyworobak Anthology*, although "Bubbles" is a clever piece of craftsmanship. But T. Inglis Moore does better by Mr Howarth than he does by Miss Dobson. His "Boundary Riders" takes a difficult thought and develops it through a series of purely Australian images. As an exercise in employing local imagery to carry a universal theme it goes beyond the *Jindyworobak* thesis, and shows how flavour can be given to an almost metaphysical poem by deliberate choice of imagery:

Provisoers, our paddock fences, shape the direction  
Of all our days, with a thousand implacable posts  
Marking each destined act, till the will's advance  
Follows only the fence-line. There is no expanse  
Of the wide bush to gallop, no roads to the coasts  
For boundary riders unfree, cut off from perfection.

Peter Hopegood is himself in both books, although he allows himself to crusade more literally than usual in "Crux"; while W. Hart-Smith has ceased here to be a *Jindyworobak* and produces a highly wrought poem in "Bathymeter".

The other thirty odd poets Mr Howarth has chosen for inclusion in the *Jindyworobak Anthology* justify his taste and his wide area of search. The aborigines are celebrated by Arthur Murphy, Jack Sorensen, Irene Gough and Lilith Norman. The latter's poem "The Colour of Sorrow" was one of the prize winners in the *Sydney Morning Herald* poetry competition of 1947. A wide variety of aspects of the Australian scene are covered by such writers as Paul Grano, Peter Bladen, A. H. Choate and Geoffrey Dutton. Rex Ingamells is represented by a fragment from the prologue of his forthcoming monumental work *The Great South Land*. The collection is given balance by a limpid picture of a Welsh scene by H. M. Bethune, by one of R. G. Howarth's subtly turned and beguilingly brief lyrics, and by Edna Tredinnick's poem of slowly unfolded realization, "The Dead Hand".

*Australian Poetry* is in format and production a triumph of superior financial resources. Rosemary Dobson has favoured poets of established eminence, and at least twenty of her contributors are well-known names in the field of contemporary Australian poetry, including Robert FitzGerald, Douglas Stewart, David Campbell, Kenneth Mackenzie, Ernest G. Moll, James McAuley and Francis Webb. The standard is consistently high and the craftsmanship finished. The survey makes good reading and illustrates the standard of contemporary poetry in this country at its highest level of mature craftsmanship.

One might have wished that Miss Dobson had been more adventurous in her selections from newer and less known poets, but one cannot but admire here also the consistency of her taste. Her own poem "Child with a Cockatoo" shows a fine feeling for the colour of words, used with discrimination to produce striking pictorial effects, and allied with a gift for musical cadences. An instinct for shape and finish, shown in her own work, has guided as well as limited her choice of poems, but it is a good instinct and the results are worth while.

The two anthologies together cover adequately the poetic output of this country during the past year. The standard of work produced and the number of poets writing indicate that there is room for two anthologies, and that two anthologies are better than one.

ARTHUR ASHWORTH

NOTE.—Proofs of *Jindyworobak Anthology*, 1949 were not seen by the Editor, who accordingly takes no responsibility for the numerous typographical errors.

### ROSSETTI AS MORALIZER

*Poems of Rossetti*. Chosen by Lilian Howarth, B.A. B.Ec. (Angus and Robertson, 1950. 16s.)

Let no man awe thee on any height  
Of earthly kingship's mouldering might.  
The dust his heel holds meet for thy brow  
Hath all of it been what both are now:  
And thou and he may plague together  
A beggar's eyes in some dusty weather  
When none that is now knows sound or sight.

These lines could suggest Fitzgerald's Omar gone a bit stiff in the joints; yet perhaps some readers have already recognized them as a stanza from Rossetti's "Soothsay", which, like *The Rubaiyat*, is a poem devoted to moralizing.

Every schoolboy can quote Rossetti's glorious meditative, "The Sea-Limits": but this other meditative has never commended itself to anthologists, possibly because of those stanzas which, like the above, can hardly be said to glow with the flame of genius. Nevertheless, the poem has other claims on the attention of the commentator and even perhaps of the anthologist, especially in an age which, notwithstanding a marked propensity for dabbling in the shallows, is also, and quite as markedly, born old in the head, and therefore liable to sift its poets, and all poets, most meticulously in search of psychologically sound advice—advice for living and on how to achieve practical self-expression as a valid pattern for living. Further, for an age of so unaffectedly economical a temper,



perhaps some of the more pedestrian excursions of our poets may tip the scale against those in which their Pegasus has contrived to spurn the clouds.

Here, for instance, are two sober enough stanzas in which "Soothsay" (despite its unfortunate title, rather suggesting to modern ears some palmists' periodical) offers the best of all counsel to the poet in any age or environment:

Crave thou no dower of earthly things  
Unworthy Hope imaginings.  
To have brought true birth of Song to be  
And to have won hearts to Poesy,  
Or anywhere in the sun or rain  
To have loved and been loved again  
Is loftiest reach of Hope's bright wings:

and

Unto the man of yearning thought  
And aspiration, to do nought  
Is in itself almost an act,  
Being chasm-fire and cataract  
Of the soul's utter depths unseal'd.  
Yet woe to thee if once thou yield  
Unto the act of doing nought!

And here is one which achieves profound assessment of a problem which for some artists can be both intimately insidious and recurrently insinuous to damp down many a resurgence of the creative fire:

Strive that thy works prove equal: lest  
That work which thou hast done the best  
Should come to be to thee at length  
(Even as to envy seems the strength  
Of others) hateful and abhor'd,  
Thine own above thyself made lord,  
Of self-rebuke the bitterest.

Another is more general in its address:

Let thy soul strive that still the same  
Be early friendship's sacred flame.  
The affinities have strongest part  
In youth, and draw men heart to heart:  
As life wears on and finds no rest,  
The individual in each breast  
Is tyrannous to sunder them.

No ageing person will query the profoundly disturbing truth of those last two lines; yet the value of the whole stanza will not commend itself to all. Not a little may depend on opportunities, proffered or withheld in youth, for enjoying true friendship. Again, and most piteously, today we must take more than ever into account the slings and arrows (or rather their modern equivalents) of a Fortune of outrageously stepped up tempo, more relentlessly inclined, with the outbreak of each successive world war, to annihilate the opposite number, or even both or all parties, in any intimate alliance.

And here is perhaps the most modernly acceptable of all the verses of this poem—this and the last few lines which we shall quote later:

Let lore of all Theology  
Be to thy soul what it can be:  
But know, the Power that fashions man



Measured not out thy little span  
 For thee to take the meeting-rod  
 In turn, and so approved God  
 Thy science of Theometry.

This may well indicate that reservation, that last resort as background to all our knowledge, at which today the physicist is no longer inclined to cavil, even though restricting his admissions to the most cautiously worded hints, or after all, (I had almost written "above all") the man has his reputation to consider, and no "respectable" thinker can afford to make free play with so modernly disreputable a word as "God", except, of course, the anthropologist, and even he is best advised to employ a small "g".

Finally, we may regard the note on which the poem ends as dictated by the experience of the thinker of any age when essaying a dispassionate comparison between the panorama of his own and that of any former era:

As in a gravegarth, count to see  
 The monuments of memory.  
 Be this thy soul's appointed scope:  
 Gaze onward without claim to hope,  
 Nor, gazing backward court regret.

Sombre, but inevitable thinking—Omar returned with some of the wine-sodden loam shaken from his gown—and an effective bracer, because pressing no extravagant claims on life and therefore secure against exaggerated disappointment, this *Soothsay* does not sound at all like a product of that "Fleshly School of Poetry" once flayed in the *Contemporary Review* by Robert Buchanan.

The fact is that, in Rossetti, we may observe a many-faceted genius, a poet-painter whose taut draftsmanship, both in words or on canvas, was so nervous-sure that, even in poems where that "fleshly" imagery was exploited to the full, as in those tender and graceful and most gracious sonnets, "The Kiss" and "Nuptial Sleep", one is always aware of an underlying clean-cut eclecticism, both of temper and in symbol selection, which reflects the Dantesque austerity of the protagonists created by Rossetti, the painter, on his canvases.

There was a Jester, a foul lout  
 Whom the court loved for graceless arts;  
 Sworn scholiast of the bestial parts  
 Of speech: a ribald mouth to shout  
 In Folly's horny tympanum  
 Such things as make the wise man dumb.

This, from his poem depicting Dante's sojourn at the court of that "great dog", *Can Grande della Scala*, shows us how vehemently Rossetti scorned and repudiated any salacious use of erotic imagery. Indeed, the opening invocation of the sonnet entitled "The Portrait" is ample proof of this finding:

O Lord of all compassionate control,  
 O Love! let this my lady's picture glow  
 Under my hand to praise her name, and show  
 Even of her inner self the perfect whole: . . .

while the ending, with its plea that the painter may succeed in presenting.

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The very sky and sea-line of her soul

at once takes us back to the wistful immensities of "The Sea-Limits".

Fleshly? Yes if one may term "fleshly" the matings of the sylph, the undine, and above all, the self-consuming, yet never consumable, salamander.

Just one hundred years ago the Pre-Raphaelites entered the Victorian pattern. As a contribution to their centennial acclaim, Angus and Robertson have published a selection of Rossetti's poems which has been made by Lilian Howarth. It has been the special care of the editor that the poem's perfected work should be presented, as in the revised 1881 texts. Yet, where certain alterations (as distinct from emendations) occur in the 1881 text, as a patent sop to the outcry raised by Buchanan and party, the editor has reverted to the original 1870 text. This has ensured the inclusion of "Nuptial Sleep", which had been excised from the later text.

For it took a bold man to defy Victorian prudishness; and prudence inevitably recommended itself before long as the better part of valour. And when we examine this poem today, we can indeed see why it was bound to be dubbed "fleshly". It is. But, at the same time, how magnificent and magnanimous and spiritual a fleshliness is there! As Mrs Howarth says in her quiet admirably condensed introduction, "There is no demarcation for him (Rossetti) between the material and the spiritual, the blending and fusion of which are seen, for example, in 'The Blessed Damsel'. The spiritual is still sensuous, the material is reft of its earthiness and impurity."

And, despite what we are told of the Persian mystics and the hidden ethereality of their wine and their drinking companions, who can say as much of Omar? The old reprobate is literally soaked in spilt of the local vintage, and he makes no pretence of mysticism or to discuss it except as an instructed sceptic.

But Rossetti was fed from his earliest years on Dante's undying flame. As well feed a budding poet on live salamanders! Small wonder that this so profoundly ascetic culmination of the Troubadours' Creed entered and consumed him, heart, mind, and soul.

You may recall another poem of his—the ballad, "Sister Helen". Whenever or wherever was the infernal flame of hatred so ably nursed and cosseted and brought to a white-hot soul-destroying intensity both of heat and of focus? Certainly not any of the mediaeval balladists, though they had their own ways of securing like effects. Reread it, if you are interested in reconstructing the mind of the witch intent on roasting a golem! Browning could have written "Jenny" or "A Last Confession" and have offered us something with sterner sinews. Browning could not have written "Sister Helen", nor is his whipcord anywhere equal to the sustained and relentless effort demanded of the creator of this poem.

But I have strayed from the strict definition of our subject in mentioning this ballad, unless one can regard it as an example of unconscious moralizing, a fable with an unexpressed yet indirectly conveyed moral.

PETER HOPEGOOD

## HARPUR AND HIS EDITOR

In most criticisms of Charles Harpur, reference, usually complimentary, is made to his "The Creek of the Four Graves". The reason seems plain—such criticisms are, for the most part, based on *The Poems by Charles Harpur* published in 1883 by George Robertson of Melbourne, with the apparent imprimatur of the poet's widow, in which selection the "Creek" ranks about fourth in length and is the only long, or longish, poem that has a definite Australian setting.

The authors of those criticisms, Turner and Sutherland in their *Development of Australian Literature* (1898), question the authority or propriety of the omission from the "Creek" of a number of lines, basing here apparently on the difference between the text of 1883 and that of the version included in *The Bushrangers and other Poems* published in 1853. Now the interval between the latter and the poet's death in 1868, over which we know that Harpur was busy in writing new, or revising old, poems would clearly give sufficient time for extensive revisions of the text; but Turner and Sutherland *may* have had in mind, though I think that they did not quote, a significant passage in the Preface to 1883 signed with the simple initial "M", now identified with the late Henry Maydwell Martin of Adelaide. Since that passage has been passed over by most later critics, I give it here in full from pages xv and xvi:—

One result of Mr Harpur's financial ill-success was that during his lifetime no full edition of his works was ever published; but a collection of his sonnets was brought out somewhere about the year 1840. Some pieces have also been printed from time to time, in newspapers and elsewhere. The best of these are here republished, in many cases with last corrections by the author's own hand. *In the case of others, and especially of his latest, and on the whole finest work, the editor has had, with diffidence, to supply those final revisions which the author had been obliged to leave unmade.\**

Elsewhere† I have dealt, in brief, with the general bearings of this important editorial statement, and here would simply stress the significance of the sentence italicized as indicating a procedure which we today would hardly regard as within the limits of honest editorship. If the emendations made to the poet's "latest" and "finest" work were merely the correction of obvious clerical errors and so on, why did not Martin simply say so? We are definitely prompted to infer that the editorial "revisions" were more numerous and more important than the correction of such trifling errors, and, since we are given not the faintest clue as to which of the included pieces have been thus revised (except the "Description of a Tropical Island" and "Genius Lost", both explicitly stated to be extracts), the whole collection must necessarily fall under suspicion. If suspicion has arisen, it appears to have been countervailed or suppressed through reliance on the seeming endorsement given in the Dedication of the book signed by the poet's widow Mary Harpur, of whose relations with the editor, however, we have had until recently no knowledge.

Recent researches, however, in the Mitchell Library Harpur Mss. throw light on these vitally important matters. It is impossible in the limited space

\* Italics mine.

† Paper read before the Royal Australian Historical Society in November 1945. See *R.A.H.S. Journal* for 1946.

here available to give full explanations and references, which I hope to present in another place. Suffice it to say that towards the end of his life Charles Harpur, partly in preparation for a projected English edition of his poems, collected into eleven manuscript booklets a selection of pieces, not including some three or four of the longest ones. This collection runs to over three hundred foolscap pages and was patently written out with great carefulness. These booklets were made between the death of his second son Charley in March 1867 (a tragedy which is the subject of two of the poems) and the end of that same year, which is several times specifically given, once almost at the very end of Booklet II. The booklets were not materially altered by Harpur later. He certainly began a No. 12 but died not very long after beginning it, and it was thereafter completed by his eldest son Washington, under the direction of his widow.

Subsequently the latter selected and added other booklets, including four long and important poems, bringing the total number to twenty, and this was at some later date, but not later than 1882, reduced to eighteen.

Of the twenty, all but one, No. 15, are still extant and identifiable, distributed among the many volumes of Harpur Mss. in the Mitchell; and from various evidences, it is inferably certain that the final eighteen booklets were the material supplied by Mary Harpur to Martin, and which after the latter had completed his editing of the *Poems* of 1883 were duly returned to Mary Harpur.

"The Creek of the Four Graves" is the first poem in this final selection made by the poet himself and occupies pages 1-14 in Booklet No. 1.

This poem is very clearly and carefully written out, and contains only some half-dozen corrections and these are such, apart from correction of clerical errors, as might very well occur to the author when writing out a final copy. It is noteworthy, therefore, that in about fourteen places the text has been emended by another hand, and in pencil. The hand is not that of Mary Harpur, and Harpur invariably made his emendations in ink. Two of these pencillings are correction of plain clerical error, but the rest are substitutions of other words for Harpur's own text, e.g. "ramparts" for "rampires", "Indian hue" for "Indian beauty", "doomful wild" for "doomful Forest", and "more beautiful" for "beautifully wilder".

It is worth pointing out that, while one of the pencillings, "snake-life" substituted for "stake-like", indicates a lack of perception of Harpur's image, eight of them destroy Harpur's double-ending to the respective lines, whence we might infer that the penciller failed to appreciate the value of this device to obviate monotony in normally iambic pentameter verse.\*

Furthermore in all instances (save one where a whole line has been omitted) the *pencilled reading* is the same as that in the *Poems* of 1883. This we may justifiably accept as confirmation that this Ms. was, in fact, the source of M's version, and that the pencillings represent some stage in the editing—presumably before the whole poem was copied out for the printer.

\* In at least nine instances, including "stake-like" the Ms. reading agrees with the printed "Bushrangers" reading, and this confirms the genuineness of these as against the pencillings.

But in that editing the poem was reduced by about one-third, the reductions being distributed thus:

			Pt. I	II	III	Total Lines	
Ms.	..	..	1867	137	145	128	410
Poems	..	..	1883	109	94	67	270

More detailed scrutiny reveals that the reduction was effected by omitting at irregular intervals throughout the poem one, two, or more lines: there are three instances in which a considerable number of consecutive lines have been dropped, namely eight, twenty and thirty-eight in the respective three Parts, and it is worth noting that in these three dropped passages four, fourteen and twelve lines respectively are substantially the same in the Ms. as in the *Bushrangers* version of 1853, so we may presume that omissions in these instances were part, at least, of the ground of the criticism by Turner and Sutherland.

In addition to, and possibly in some places as a consequence of these omissions, other lines have been telescoped, that is, two lines condensed into one. Also many verbal alterations have been made, and Harpur's doubly-indicated initial capitals (otherwise than at the beginning of lines) replaced by lower-case letters.

Now, in the extant letters from Martin to Mary Harpur—there are only nine in all—we find that "The Creek" is, with the exception of "The Iliad", the only poem mentioned by name, and the reference is very apposite to our present point.

In a letter dated 9 December 1882, reporting substantial progress on the book, and seemingly in reply to inquiry from Mary Harpur, Martin writes:

We had intended to publish *extracts* from the "Creek of the Four Graves" but not to print it in its entirety on account of a few bad lines here and there which my critic\* would not pass. It is very undesirable to have any lines printed which may serve as a handle for carping criticism. When we found that you had a special value for the Poem we reconsidered the question, and found that the weak lines could be excised without injuring the plan of the whole. This has been done and we feel satisfied that it is much better now than the extracts alone would have been. The *descriptive* portions of this poem have always excited our warm admiration.

Without entering into lengthy discussion of Martin's editorial methods, indicated also in a letter dated 3 August 1882, and without discussing Martin & Co's conception of "weak lines" or the correct procedure of an editor in dealing with them in print, we may content ourselves with pointing out that such a procedure as Martin describes above might naturally lead to such a result as our examination of the poem has revealed; that it goes very much further than the "final revisions left unmade by the author" publicly admitted in the Preface quoted earlier; and that the phrasing, in both public and private statements, was adopted, more or less, to avoid undue hurt to the feelings of the widow of the poet whose work Martin was preparing for publication.

Let us compare three passages in the two versions:

\* This "critic" was undoubtedly a friend and editorial coadjutor whose advice was apparently regarded by Martin; who is referred to several times in the correspondence but never named. His identity is still unknown.

## SOUTHERLY

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### Part I, lines 1-7 (1883)

#### A

A settler in the olden times went forth  
With four of his most bold and trusted men  
Into the wilderness—went forth to seek  
New streams and wider pastures for his fast  
Increasing flocks and herds. O'er mountain routes  
And over wild wolds clouded up with brush,  
And cut with marshes perilously deep,—

### Lines 1-11 (Ms. 1867)

x I verse a Settler's tale of olden times—  
x One told me by our sage friend Egremont:  
x Who then went forth, meetly equipt, with four  
x Of his most trusty and adventurous men  
x Into the wilderness,—went forth to seek  
x New streams and wider pastures for his fast  
x Augmenting flocks and herds. On foot were all,  
x For horses then were beasts of too great price  
x To be much ventured upon mountain routes,  
x And over wild wolds clouded up with brush  
x And cut with marshes, perilously pathless.\*

#### B

### Part II, lines 12-17 (1883)

Then her full light in silvery sequence still  
Cascading forth from ridgy slope to slope,  
Chased mass by mass the broken darkness down  
Into the dense-bushed valleys, where it crouched,  
And shrank, and struggled, like a dragon-doubt  
Glooming a lonely spirit.

### Lines 16-26 (Ms. 1867)

Thus o'er that dark height her great orb conglobed,  
Till her full light, in silvery sequence still  
Cascading forth from ridgy slope to slope,  
Like the dropt foldings of a lucent veil,  
Chased mass by mass the broken darkness down  
Into the dense-brushed valleys, where it crouched,  
And shrank, and struggled, like a dragon doubt  
Glooming some lonely spirit that doth still  
Resist the Truth with obstinate shifts and shows,  
Though shining out of heaven, and from defect  
Winning a triumph that might else not be.

### Part III, lines 57-67 (1883)

He gained the shelter of his longed-for home  
And in that glade, far in the doomful wild,  
In sorrowing record of an awful hour  
Of human agony and loss extreme,  
Untimely spousals with a desert death,  
Four grassy mounds are there beside the creek,  
Bestrewn with sprays and leaves from the old trees  
Which moan the ancient dirges that have caught  
the heed of dying ages, and for long  
The traveller passing then in safety there  
Would call the place—The Creek of the Four Graves.

\*The lines marked thus X at the beginning are those that appear in the *Bushrangers* version of 1853. There are numerous minor verbal differences—not always in favour of the 1867 version—but the passages are substantially the same.



Lines 75-128 (end) (Ms. 1867)

x He gained the welcoming shelter of his Home  
 x Return we for a moment to the scene  
 x Of recent death. There the lateflaring fire  
 x Now smouldered, for its brands were strewn about;  
 x And four stark corpses, plundered to the skin  
 x And brutally mutilated, seemed to stare  
 x With frozen eyeballs up into the pale  
 x Round visage of the Moon, who, high in heaven,  
 x With all her stars, in golden beves, gazed  
 x As peacefully down as on a bridal there  
 x Of the warm Living—not, alas! on them  
 x Who kept in ghastly silence through the night  
 x Untimely spousals with a desert death.

O God! and thus this lovely world hath been  
 Accursed for ever by the bloody deeds  
 Of its prime Creature—Man. Erring or wise,  
 Savage or civilised, still hath he made  
 This glorious residence, the Earth, a Hell  
 Of wrong and robbery and untimely death!  
 Some dread Intelligence opposed to Good  
 Did, of a surety, over all the earth  
 Spread out from Eden—or it were not so!

For see the bright beholding Moon, and all  
 The radiant Host of Heaven, evince no touch  
 Of sympathy with Man's wild violence;—  
 Only evince in their calm course, their part  
 In that original unity of Love,  
 Which, like the soul that dwelleth in a harp,  
 Under God's hand, in the beginning chimed  
 The sabbath concord of the Universe;  
 And look on a gay clique of maidens, met  
 In village tryst, and interwhirling, all  
 In glad Arcadian dances on the green—  
 Or on a hermit, in his vigils long,  
 Seen kneeling at the doorway of his cell—  
 Or on a monster battlefield where lie

In sweltering heaps, the dead and dying both,  
 On the cold gory ground,—as they that night  
 Looked in bright peace, down on the doomful Forest.  
 x Afterwards there, for many changeul years,  
 x Within a glade that sloped into the bank  
 x Of that wild mountain Creek—midway within,  
 x In partial record of a terrible hour  
 x Of human agony and loss extreme,  
 x Four grassy mounds stretched lengthwise side by side,  
 x Startled the wanderer;—four long grassy mounds  
 x Bestrewn with leaves, and withered spraylets, stript  
 x By the loud wintry winged gales that roamed  
 x Those solitudes, from the old trees which there  
 x Moaned the same leafy dirges that had caught  
 x The heed of dying Ages: these were all;  
 x And thence the place was long by travellers called  
 x The Creek of the Four Graves. Such was the Tale  
 x Egremont told us of the wild old times.

There is scarcely need to point out the differences between the Ms. and the 1883 versions; and I would simply remark that of the 38 lines omitted from



the last passage, the last 26 are a natural, and characteristically Harpurian, extension of lines already existing in the 1853 version. Though perhaps open to slight exception on the score of irrelevance to the actual story, they can scarcely be objected to as "weak".

A number of parallel abbreviations can be noted in the 1883 *Poems*. "A Storm in the Mountains", for example, has been reduced from 201 lines to 146, "The Witch of Hebron" from 1656 to 1219; some 20 lines are docked from the end of "Monodies II"; and for all these serious abridgements no hint or reason is given save the prefatorial, and wholly inadequate, reference to "final revisions that the author had been obliged to leave unmade".\*

Another instance of editorial manipulation is furnished in "Genius Lost". There is no objection, of course, to an editor's giving portion only of a poem if precluded from quoting the whole by reasons of space; here a cogent reason indeed as "Genius Lost" is easily the longest of all Harpur's poems, 2384 lines—and the excerpts are correctly, in both senses, entitled "Fragments", but surely some explanatory hint might have been given that the subject of the poem, as is clear from Ms., was the tragic fate of Thomas Chatterton.

Now Harpur's poem ends with Chatterton singing his own wild requiem—his longing

O for a grave in the bend of a brook,  
Or under a weeping willow tree!  
O for a grave on some lonely cliff,  
That hangs sheer over the passing skiff  
And throbs to the beat of the sounding sea!

Whereafter the Night Hours and the Day Hours lament in chorus the unhappy life and tragic death of Misery's child. In place of this Martin has given the epitaph—"Be his rest who sleeps below"—admittedly a beautiful little piece, but it does *not* belong to "Genius Lost" but has been imported thereinto from an independent series of six small poems entitled "Autumnal Leaves".†

To obviate the monotony of a long series of more or less similar examples in quotation, may I simply summarize a mass of detail with short illustrative extracts?

Of the 100 pieces included in the *Poems* of 1883, some 50‡ have been compared with the originals in the booklets. Some 6 or 7 show little alteration, save for the "modernization"—shall I say—of the punctuation, e.g. substitution of a full stop for Harpur's exclamation mark; and the replacing of Harpur's frequent capitals (where occurring within a line and not personal names) by lower-case letters. A curious instance of the latter (combined with other alterations) occurs in "Monodies I", where line 33 runs, in 1883.

And yet through doubts, dull clouds, uplooking see,

\* Perhaps the most extreme example of abbreviation is "A Coast View". In the *Empire* in 1857 it had 90 lines, in Ms. 1867, 106, but in 1883 only 23.

† A version of these pieces was printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 7 May, 1867.

‡ In explanation of the comparisons being, in effect, restricted to only about one-half the collection, I would say that having proved (to my own satisfaction) that the eighteen booklets were M's source, and having seen in poem after poem how freely he had treated his material, I rejected the whole of 1883 as unauthoritative and thus of no value in preparing a collection of Harpur's poems, arranged on a chronological plan, while comparisons between Harpur's own work and Ms. "revisions" would, very obviously, not throw light on the mind and art of Harpur.

which is at least obscure. That obscurity disappears when we find that Harpur wrote "Doubt's dull clouds"; and we have no doubt that the textual corruption *began*, at least, in M's substitution of a lower-case letter for Harpur's capital D.

In "To - - -" we find Martin combining portions of two poems, "To - - -" (to Henry Parkes) and "A Rhyme".

At least fourteen major poems, including "Genius Lost", "The Creek", "Witch of Hebron", "Monodies II" instanced above, have been considerably abbreviated. The total includes also "Onward", "Dream by the Fountain", "Humanity", "Coast View" and "The 'Nevers' of Poetry"; and in no instance, as before remarked, is there any indication of abbreviation or extract. On the contrary the mode of printing carries the plain indication that what is thus given is the full poem as written by Harpur.

Eight other poems have been materially altered. For instance in "The Emigrant's Vision", stanzas 1 and 5 (beginning and end) have been altered from the first person—"As *our* bark dashed . . . I was gazing"—to the third person—"As *his* bark" etc. etc. with a consequent lowering of the poetic energy of the whole poem. The same effect can be seen in the sonnet "Andrew Marvell", the last two lines of which, in 1883, read:

I glory in my brotherhood with men  
And feel how nobly all may live and die

reversing the Ms. order, indentation and rhyme system, of

I feel how nobly all may live and die  
And glory in my brotherhood with Men.

The Ms. reading is that of the sonnet as first published in Harpur's *Thoughts* in 1845, except that in the latter the final word is "Man", probably the better poetic reading of the two.

The number of slight verbal and phraseological alterations is too great for extensive quotation, but the two following present points of considerable interest.

In "The Forgotten", 1883, the fourth couplet runs:

And the bards of the people inwrought with their lays  
The light of his glory, the sound of his praise.

Harpur actually wrote "the Truth of his praise"—surely a more poetically telling phrase than the conventional emendation.

And, on what ground, we may ask, did Martin omit from between the fourteenth and fifteenth line of his version of "Words" Harpur's couplet

While a great Book is in my view  
A greater Deed than Waterloo;

From the above facts and quotations—a few out of many—it is clear that the gravest suspicions engendered by the prefatorial reference to editorial "final revisions" are fully justified, and that the so-called *Poems* by Charles Harpur pub-

lished in 1883 is not an accurate and reliable text, even within its inherent limits as a selection of the poems of our first great native-born Australian poet.

It must be stressed that those *Poems* are only a *selection*\*—a selection from a body of verse at the disposal of the editor that was at least three, perhaps more, times as great as that actually printed, a selection moreover made by a then anonymous and still largely unknown, editor and his oft-referred-to but entirely unknown coadjutor. And, beyond this body of verse, we now have access to an immense mass of Harpur's writings, prose as well as verse, manuscript and also printed in periodicals (most of which ceased publication eighty to one hundred years ago, and which were certainly unknown to Martin), extending from as early as 1842 to 1867.

As one might reasonably expect in the writings, spread over thirty-six years, of so prolific a pen as Harpur's, many of these pieces are of merely occasional relevance, subordinate or purely biographical interest, and inferior literary merit. Until some adequate survey has been made of this voluminous authentic material, it would seem premature to attempt to assign to Harpur his correct rank in the roll of Australian poets. But, as a personal opinion (based however on some years' study of the extant Harpur material) let me say that I strongly incline to the view that rational criticism will come to see Charles Harpur as a unique and remarkable figure in our early literature; a deeper-thoughted, wider-interested, more varied and versatile, a more masculine poet than has hitherto been conceived, who not only thought himself but really was, in a much higher degree than some critics have recognized, truly Australian.

C. W. SALIER

\* Perhaps the most immediately obvious deficiencies are the omission "A Poet's Home" and Harpur's long *Australian* poem, "The Kangaroo Hunt".

#### CORRESPONDENCE

St. Paul's College,  
Walla Walla, N.S.W.

The Editor of *Southerly*:

Dear Sir,

I have had referred to me your issue No. 2 containing the letter from Muir Holburn re Charles Harpur and the comments thereon by the late Mr Salier.

I had, of course, seen the *Literary News*, published by Tegg in 1837, but, with the thought in mind that Charles Harpur never published anything anonymously or pseudonymously, I did not look beyond the pseudonym, "Stebii". (I remember only one other instance of Harpur's publishing a poem anonymously, and that was in Deniehy's *Southern Cross*.) But even a cursory examination of the six poems by Stebii, I see now, is sufficient for their recognition as Harpur's.

But these poems of Harpur's were by no means the first published by him. He had begun publishing verse about five years before his pseudonymous contributions to the *Literary News*!

On 20 December 1833, the *Australian* published "The Wreck", a poem of four stanzas by Harpur. In succeeding issues of the same paper appeared the following:

1835

12 May—"Verses Occasioned by the Death of a Child of the Measles".

22 May—"The Hectic to her Nurse".

2 June—"The Broken Heart's Carouse".

9 June—"To Imagination".

12 June—"Love's Memories".

10 July—"Memory's Genesis".

1836

30 Dec.—"Milton"

1837

24 Jan—"Delia".

17 Feb.—"Woman".

11 July—"Wisdom".

18 July—"Love's Even Song".

11 Aug.—"The Lament of the Bard (Suggested by the Story of Chatterton)."

1838

1 June—"To Mary".

One possible explanation of Harpur's use of a pseudonym for his poems in Tegg's paper lies in the facts of his contributions to the *Australian* and of that paper's often expressed hostility towards the young *Literary News*. Another may be his experience with "a rich vulgarian" with whom, he tells us, he sought employment but who would not employ him because he had been wasting his time writing poetry. If that incident occurred in 1837, or before, it may be that Harpur, for the nonce, had determined to remain outwardly respectable and uneccentric.

Of the above-listed poems, the "Verses Occasioned by the Death of a Child of the Measles" were the "On the Death of an Infant Relative" republished, with some alterations, in the *Literary News* (3 February 1838). The "Infant Relative" was his sister's child.

But, earlier than the hitherto accepted date of Harpur's first publications as these poems I have discovered may be, they were not his first contributions to the press. The two earliest published poems of his that I have found are "An Australian Song", printed in *The Currency Lad* for 4 May 1833, and "The Grave of Clements", in the same paper a week later.

To round off my list of early publications of, and early references to, Charles Harpur, I give the following:

*Sydney Times*

- 22 Aug. 1834: his name figures in the *To Correspondents* column
- 16 Sept. 1834: contains his poem "The Banquet of Love".
- 23 Sept. 1834: the *To Correspondents* column acknowledged receipt of "Three Glees"—"The Pirates", "The Sea Captain" and "The Robbers", by C. Harpur.
- 21 March 1835: contained his poem "The Minstrel".
- 24 Sept. 1836: contained "The Dream—A Love Song".

*The Australian*

- 16 Dec. 1833: *Notices to Correspondents* column promises the appearance of his "The Wreck".
- 21 April 1835: *Notices to Correspondents* column claims verses from "C. H" are too long but will be published "if their mutilation be not objected to".

One cannot imagine Harpur's refraining from objecting. The next issue, therefore, 24 April, admits it would be "impossible to curtail the lines of C. Harpur, without destroying the connection". Publication was accordingly refused, for lack of space.

*The Australian*

- 8 May 1835: promised that verses by C. Harpur would appear in the next number.

It is to be noted that when Harpur published his first poems in the *Currency Lad* he had just turned twenty.

It may be of interest further to note that Charles Harpur's older brother, Joseph Jehoshaphat, later a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, was also a writer of published verse and that some of his poems were printed in the *Australian* as early as 1830, when he was nineteen. Verse by J. J. H. appeared in the issues of 16 April, 13 August, 20 August, 19 November 1830, 28 January, 29 April 1831.

To return to the two poems mentioned above, published in the *Currency Lad* for 4 and 17 May 1833. Harpur's "An Australian Song" was republished nearly a decade later—in the *Australasian Chronicle* for 6 December 1842—under a new name that does not improve it: "Australia, Huzzal!"

The other, "The Grave of Clements", is the original of "The Glen of the White Man's Grave"—first published in the *Maitland Mercury* in 1846. And this brings me to an article by the late Mr Salier in *Southerly*, No. 2, 1948, which I had not previously seen. Therein he compared Harpur's "The Glen of the White Man's Grave" to Kendall's poem of the same name and stated that the two poems were concerned with the same theme: the murder of a white man by the blacks. In this Mr Salier was mistaken. The themes were entirely different. Kendall's was murder by blacks—Harpur's was murder by bushrangers and this poem of his had nothing to do with his "Creek of the Four Graves", which is concerned with murder by blacks.

The white man's grave which is the subject of Harpur's poem was the grave of an immigrant named Clements who was killed by the bushranger, John Donohoe, about 1829. He was killed on the road between Windsor and the Hunter River and it was on a trip between these two places that Harpur turned aside to visit his grave—"I had travelled most of the day over rugged mountains, which lay range after range around me, like a sea of billows, but some held sway, as it were, over the rest, peering like rival emperors above them, and I had now descended into a deep hollow glen." In an introductory note to his poem, in prose that shows that this lad of twenty had no mean command of English, Harpur tells of his pilgrimage to that lonely grave:

I have heard of his fate which induced me to turn out of the road to see his grave: it was calm evening; the sun was going down over the western summits, leaving his glory behind him, as a prince casts off his robes on retiring to his slumbers: the evening breeze had ceased to whisper and all was peace. I leaned over the grave, and involuntarily sighed, "poor Clements", for I felt a strange sympathy for the dead:—I imagined him on that fatal day just like myself, young, healthful and buoyant—feeling all the wildness of the scene, or perhaps contrasting them with those of happier ones, where all he loved was—far away—and indulging in the still hope, that on some future day he would again meet a mother's welcoming tear, or a father's smile. I next turned my thoughts to his parents; I pictured them, old and grey, mourning for a loved son, whom they would see no more; but, said I, his fate may yet be unknown to them; they may not yet have given up the hope of again meeting him; but did they but know, that even now the summer flower rears its head upon his lonely grave far in a wilderness, where a civilized being seldom treads—where the wild dog holds his nightly revels—where the savage, halting for a moment, points out to his children "the white man's grave"—they would weep—and I wept. The night was setting darkly in the glen—and I dropt parting tear upon the grave and hurried on.

The original poem, "The Grave of Clements", contained little about the grave or about Clements. Its theme was sympathy—the sympathy that the fate of Clements begot in Harpur's impressionable heart. This early poem he later rounded off to make it the last stanza of his longer one, "The Glen of the White Man's Grave".

\* The biographer of Harpur.—Editor.

J. W. RAWLING\*

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS

*"Literature and Life"*—The second volume of essays in this series, issued by the English Association in London, is due to appear. It will include a contribution from the Sydney Branch—W. G. Cassidy's "The Wicked Baronet".

*Last Testament*—"For use in Revolution. It is William Hay, the novelist, who dies here against this wall, after a life-long struggle (from 19) against opposition in the cause of Art, truth, charity, and the highest. Please let it be known some day." (Note found in his papers.)

*Australia—This Land of Ours*, 1949, edited by George Farwell and Frank H. Johnston and published by Angus and Robertson, contains a selection of reprinted literary items: "This Land!", a poem by Ian Mudie; "Harry Pearce", poem by David Campbell; "Call on the Sea to be Still", poem by Roland E. Robinson; "Country Towns", poem by Kenneth Slessor; and "The Road to Yesterday", story by Frank Dalby Davison. The introductory article, "This Land of Ours" is by Eleanor Dark.



*The R.L.S. Centenary*—The Centenary of the birth of Robert Louis Stevenson fell on 13 November 1950. The occasion was marked here by a broadcast of readings from his works and an exhibition of material in the Dixson Gallery of the Mitchell Library, both arranged by the British Council.

*Corrections*—*Southerly* No. 4, 1950, page 205, paragraph 1, line 7: for "Sand-rail" read "Sangrail". Page 207, paragraph 1, line 3: for "males" read "tales"; for "with" read "witch". Page 207, paragraph 1, line 10: for "Actaoens" read "Actaeons". Page 181, "The Buoy", line 6 to follow line 9. Page 211, omit 5th line of the 5th paragraph.

#### THE COMMONWEALTH LITERARY FUND

The following official statement is printed for the guidance of authors and publishers and as a matter of general interest.

##### *Pensions.*

Since 1908 the Commonwealth Government has provided a small sum annually from which pensions are granted.

The maximum pension payable was £1 per week and in the case of outstanding men of letters, £2 per week. These amounts have been increased to £2 and £3 respectively.

An applicant must have produced at least one work of literary merit, a copy of such work to be submitted with the application. A series of articles by a writer appearing in a journal, newspaper, etc., will, if of sufficiently high standard, be regarded as a work qualifying for assistance from the Fund.

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In 1938 the Government extended the scope of the Fund for the purpose of—

- (i) educating the public to a full appreciation of Australian literature;
- (ii) affording a limited number of our writers sufficient leisure to enable them to devote their whole time and talents to the production of specified works; and
- (iii) providing financial assistance towards the cost of publishing manuscripts and reprinting approved works.

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On the recommendation of the Advisory Board, the Committee may grant Fellowships to writers of merit desirous of devoting the whole or a substantial portion of their time and talent to the production of a specified work, on the following conditions:—



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- (4) A successful applicant must be prepared to devote the whole or a substantial portion of his time to the production of the work for which the Fellowship is granted.

#### *Reprinting of Approved Work.*

On the recommendation of the Advisory Board the Committee may approve of financial assistance being granted towards the cost of reprinting standard works.

It is the aim of the Fund to keep any worthy Australian book alive and in circulation and the Advisory Board is ready to consider suggestions for books that should be written or compiled. It may also commission competent writers to carry out such plans.

#### *Publication of Manuscripts.*

The Fund may also grant financial assistance towards the cost of publishing manuscripts of outstanding literary merit which otherwise would probably remain unprinted.

#### *Method of Submitting Applications.*

All applications for pensions and Fellowships must be submitted on the printed form to the Secretary, Commonwealth Literary Fund, Prime Minister's Department, Canberra. Applicants must submit complete bibliographical lists of the literary work upon which their claims are based and, whenever possible, copies of the books, which will be returned to the owner if necessary.

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### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Australian Poetry, 1948*, selected by Judith Wright. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 7s. 6d.)

*The American Drama Since 1930: Essays on Playwrights and Plays*, by Joseph Mersand, Ph.D. (The Modern Chapbooks, New York, 1949. \$2.)

*New Australians: An Occupational Analysis of Jewish Migrants in Victoria*, by Ernest Platz. (Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, Melbourne. 1s.)

*Blow, Wind of Fruitfulness*, by James K. Baxter. *Disputed Ground: Poems 1939-45*, by Charles Brasch. (The Caxton Poets, Nos 2 and 3. The Caxton Press, Christchurch, N.Z., 1948. 6s. each.)

*Creative Problems in New Zealand*, by M. H. Holcroft. (The Caxton Press, 1948).

*Diver's Luck: A Story of Pearling Days*, by Clarence Benham. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 12s. 6d.)

*British Social Services*, by G. D. H. Cole. *British Public Utility Services*, by D. N. Chester. *British Inventions* by F. Sherwood Taylor. (British Life and Thought Series, published for the British Council by Longmans Green & Co. London, 1948. 1s. each.)

*The Ethics of Ambiguity*, by Simone de Beauvoir, translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman. (Philosophical Library, New York, 1948. \$3.)

*One Mountain After Another*, by Arthur Groom. (Angus and Robertson; 1949. 15s.)

*Nature in Australia*, by Keith C. McKeon, F.R.Z.S. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 12s. 6d.)

"Rosa": *Love Sonnets to Mary Doyle*, by Charles Harpur, edited with an introduction by Cecil W. Salier. (Hutchinson & Co. [Publishers] Ltd, Melbourne, 1948. 6s.)

*The Fire on the Snow*, by Douglas Stewart. (Angus and Robertson, reprint, 1949.)

*My Love Must Wait: The Story of Matthew Flinders*, by Ernestine Hill. (Angus and Robertson, reprint, 1949. 12s. 6d.)

*By Their Fruits: A Life of Ferdinand von Mueller, Botanist and Explorer*, by Margaret Willis. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 15s.)

*The Keys of the Kingdom*, by A. J. Cronin. (Angus and Robertson, reprint, 1948. 12s. 6d.)

*Harvest and Other Stories*, by John K. Ewers. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 9s. 6d.)

*Poetry: The Magazine of the British Poetry Association*, edited by Hardiman Scott, Vol. I, Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, Spring, Summer, Autumn, 1949; Winter, 1949-50, Spring, 1950. (21 High St, Petersfield, Hants, England. 2s. each.)

*English: The Magazine of the English Association*, edited by George Cookson and Guy Boas, Spring, Summer, Autumn, 1949; Spring, 1950. (Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d. each.)

*Five Radio Plays*, edited by A. A. Phillips. (Longmans, Green & Co., Melbourne, 1949. 6s. 6d.)

*The Australian Quarterly*, June 1949. (Australian Institute of Political Science, Sydney. 3s.)

*High Valley*, by Charmian Clift and George Johnston. (Angus and Robertson, 1949. 12s. 6d.)

*Character and Motive in Shakespeare: Some Recent Appraisals Examined*, by J. I. M. Stewart. (Longmans, Green and Co., London, Melbourne, 1949. 10s. 6d.)

*Barbara Celarent: A Description of Scholastic Dialectic*, by Thomas Gilby, O.P. (Longmans, Green and Co., 1949. 18s.)

*Handbook of Australian Literature*, prepared by Rex Ingamells, B.A. (Jindy-worobak, Melbourne, 1949. n.p.)

*All That Swagger*, by Miles Franklin. (Angus and Robertson, reprint, 1949. 10s. 6d.)

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